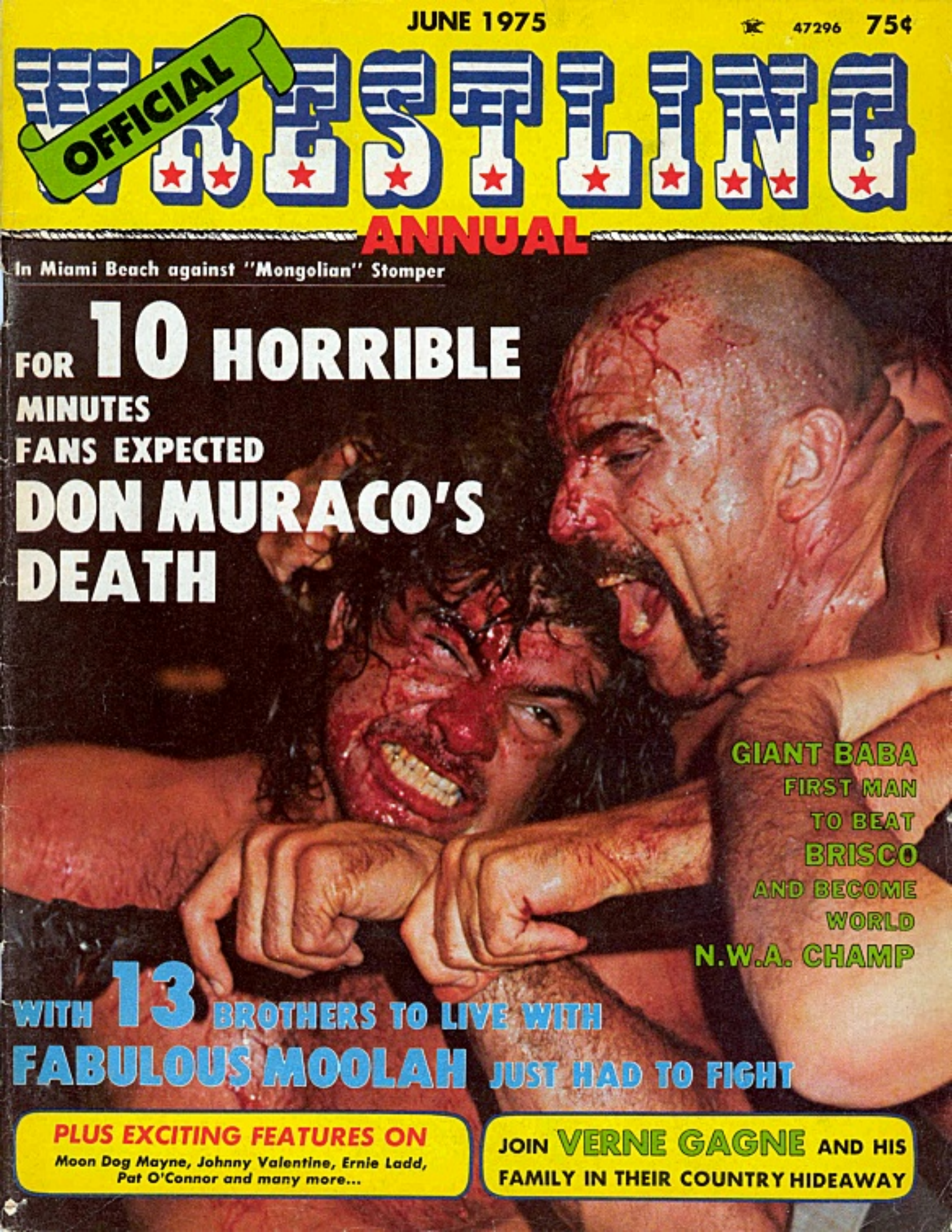
JUNE 1975 47296 75¢

OFFICIAL WRESTLING ANNUAL



In Miami Beach against "Mongolian" Stomper

FOR 10 HORRIBLE MINUTES FANS EXPECTED DON MURACO'S DEATH

GIANT BABA FIRST MAN TO BEAT BRISCO AND BECOME WORLD N.W.A. CHAMP

WITH 13 BROTHERS TO LIVE WITH FABULOUS MOOLAH JUST HAD TO FIGHT

PLUS EXCITING FEATURES ON
Moon Dog Mayne, Johnny Valentine, Ernie Ladd, Pat O'Connor and many more...

JOIN VERNE GAGNE AND HIS FAMILY IN THEIR COUNTRY HIDEAWAY

OFFICIAL WRESTLING ANNUAL

JUNE 1975

Jack Brisco is completely bewildered after losing his first match officially since winning the title in 1973.

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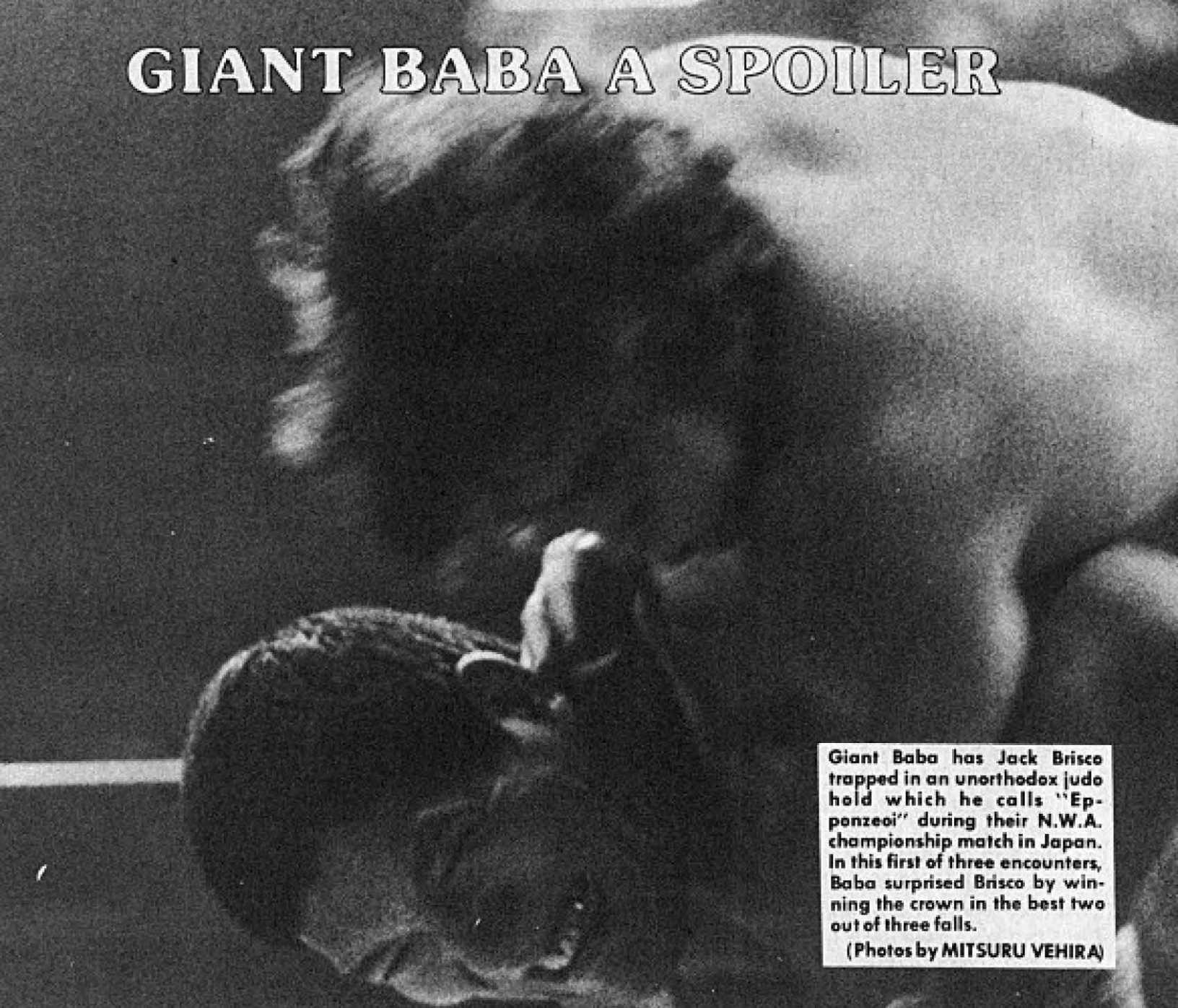
GIANT BABA A SPOILER

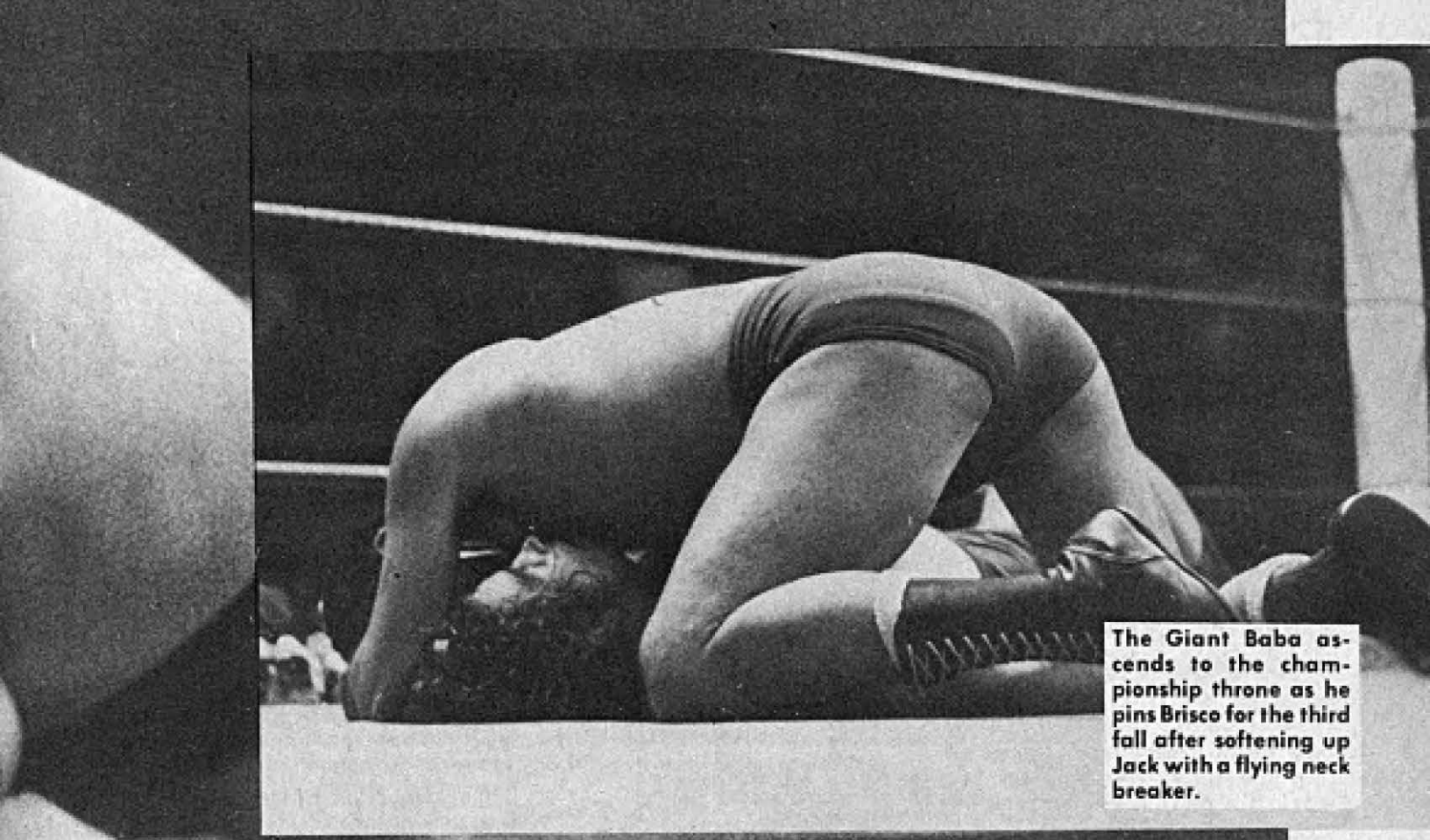


Giant Baba has Jack Brisco trapped in an unorthodox judo hold which he calls "Ep-ponzeoi" during their N.W.A. championship match in Japan. In this first of three encounters, Baba surprised Brisco by winning the crown in the best two out of three falls.

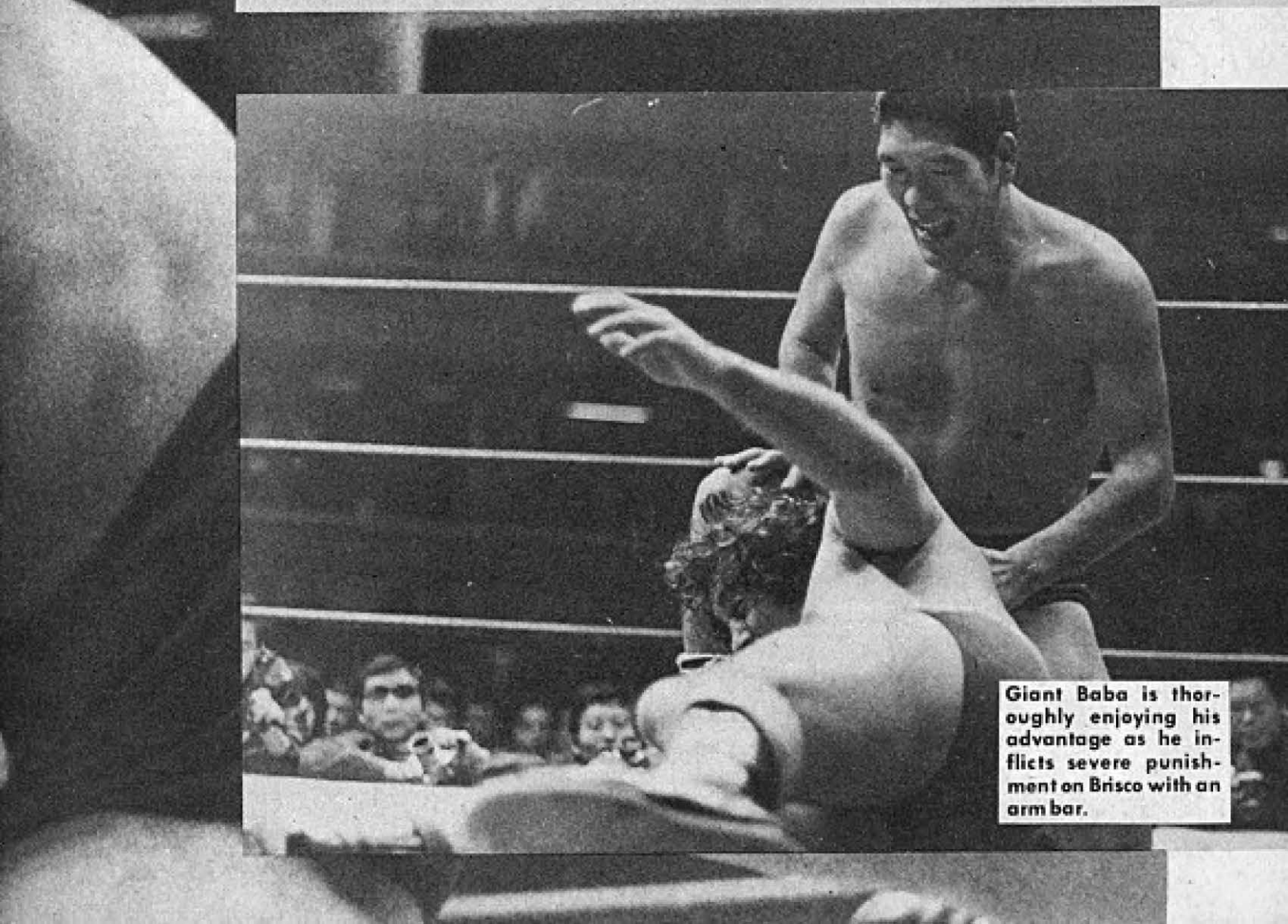
(Photos by MITSURU VEHIRA)

THE WILD NIGHT JACK BRISCO LOST HIS TITLE

By Jack Welsh



The Giant Baba ascends to the championship throne as he pins Brisco for the third fall after softening up Jack with a flying neck breaker.



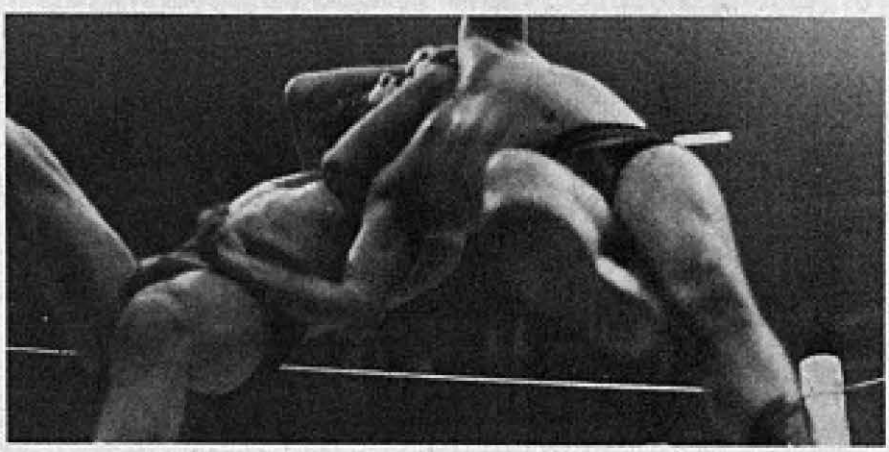
Giant Baba is thoroughly enjoying his advantage as he inflicts severe punishment on Brisco with an arm bar.

JAPAN'S ACE HOLDS N.W.A. TITLE 1 WEEK

Even the most avid followers of Jack Brisco are beginning to wonder if the handwriting isn't on the wall for the handsome Oklahoma-bred super star.

Oh yes, Brisco still holds the National Wrestling Alliance's sanction as world's heavyweight champion but there were some anxious moments last winter when Jack must have assuredly pondered why he went so far to lose so much so quickly.

It might have missed the attention of some devotees of the mat world but there was one week last



Brisco, the N.W.A. kingpin since 1973, experienced one of the toughest nights of his highly successful career as Baba catches Jack with a flying neck breaker. This hold was extremely effective for the Nippon ace and was used to set up his inaugural victory over the champion.

(Continued page 10)

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1975 CHAMPIONSHIP
ALBUM
BUT . . . DON'T FORGET Wrestling REGULAR ISSUE

JACK JOLTED TWICE IN 3 BOUT SERIES

Lord Blears, serving as acting N.W.A. president for Sam Muchnick, informs the capacity crowd that this match is a world championship match.

December when Brisco was the former world's title holder.

Since the dethroning came in Kagoshimi City, Japan it is possible many of Jack's vast patrons were late in getting the news but the man doing the job was no stranger to the international wrestling scene.

Shohei "Giant" Baba was the super power house who briefly ended Brisco's reign but the 260-pound champion of the Pacific Wrestling Federation was not destined for longevity on the throne.

However, it must be written the whirlwind three-bout series between Brisco and Baba was a seven-day package in two different cities before the Giant finally succumbed to Brisco and the N.W.A. title came back to the U.S.

Since winning the crown in 1973 Brisco has been heavily in demand throughout the world and when he was rudely dumped from the summit, Jack was on the first leg of a tour which included Australia and New Zealand.

Baba is a standout who has met such outstanding stars as Bruno Sammartino, the W.W.W.F. kingpin, and Dory Funk, Jr., the N.W.A.'s former champion, before record crowds in Japan.

The first of the exciting three-bout matchup drew a record eathering at Kagoshima City. Working in Brisco's corner were former champ Pat O'Connor and Ken Mantel while The Destroyer, extremely popular in Japan, served as Baba's second.

Both Brisco and the Giant started fast with the Japanese ace relying on his flying neck breaker, arm twists, body slams, punishing leg holds and his famous Giant chop.

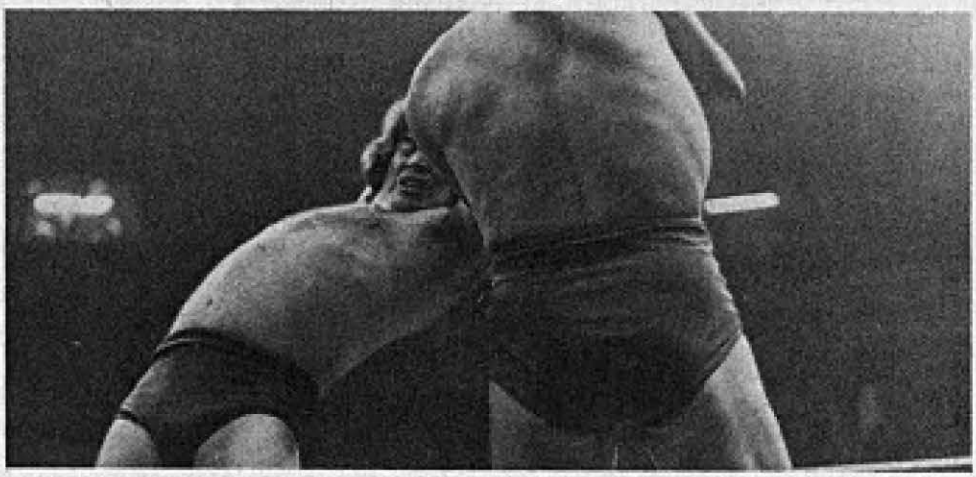
Jack, who seemed to be at a disadvantage from the opening bell, repeatedly escaped from near-pins and scored his best success with his heralded figure four leg lock.

Baba continued to flip Brisco with comparative ease and finally won the first fall after five minutes with a body press.

Brisco responded to the two-minute intermission and immediately took the initiative against this huge son of Nippon who weighs 265 pounds. In a "must win" fall, Brisco repeatedly slammed the Giant into the turnbuckle and continually weakend his opponent until he made Baba submit to a painful figure four leg lock after eight minutes of torrid action.

The Giant seemed to sense victory was within his grasp and he repeatedly punished Brisco with vicious body slams, leg and head scissors and a variety of judo chops to all legal areas of the body.

The defending N.W.A. champion called on all his guile and stamina but Baba was not to be denied. The Giant, standing six foot, six inches and regarded as perhaps.

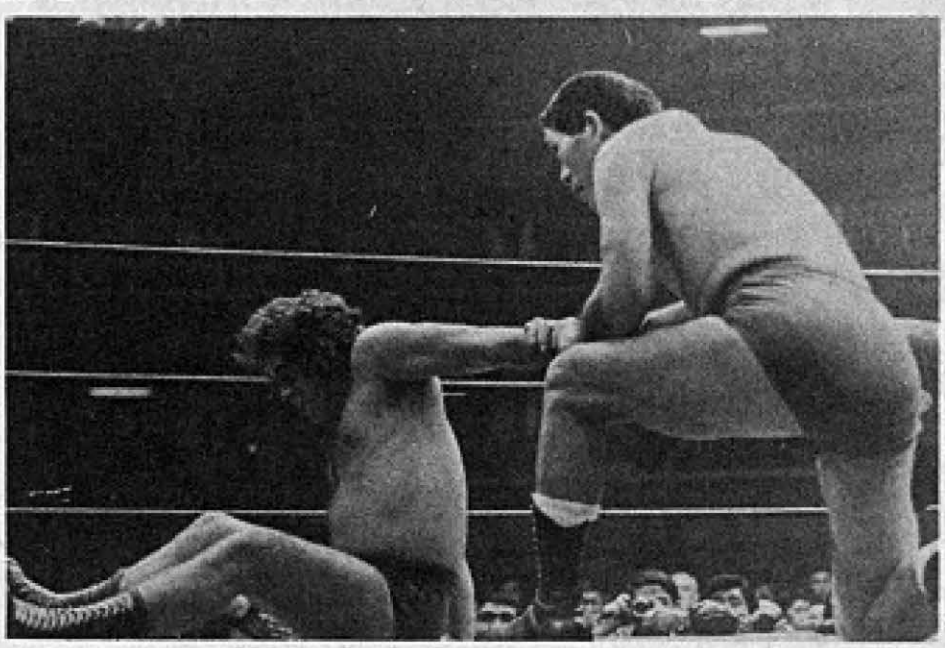


Giant Baba hasn't really lost his head as he puts the pressure on Brisco at mid-ring in a severe test of arm strength.

the No. 1 wrestler in the Far East, continued to put the pressure on Brisco and finally set up Jack for the winning fall with a flying neck breaker.

Jack's demise came at the six minute mark and Baba was offi-

(Continued page 13)



The super Japanese heavyweight musters all the strength of his 260-pounds as he catches Brisco with an arm twist.

cially acknowledged as the N.W.A.'s 49th world champion.

It was bedlam at ringside and when Lord Blears, serving as acting N.W.A. president on behalf of Sam Muchnick of St. Louis, presented the title belt to Baba, the new kingpin.

Meanwhile, the startling news was flashed to Muchnick in his N.W.A. headquarters in St. Louis and Sam immediately checked with immigration authorities in order that Baba could assume Brisco's bookings as the new champion.

Jack, who futilely protested the Giant's victory, came back as the challenger just three days later at Nihon University Hall in Tokyo. But Baba was sitting on top of the world and at the peak of his powers.

This return unfolded like a television re-run and Baba kept his new won laurels secure in the best two out of three falls.

There were 10,200 fans jamming into Toyohashi Civic Auditorium for the third meeting of these mat titans. It was now or never for Brisco to get his diadem back since he would soon pack his bags and move on to the Land Down Under.

Jack looked like his old self as he stalked his adversary on Dec. 9 — just one week after he had originally lost his championship. Brisco fashioned a series of drop kicks, body scissors, and figure four leg locks for a quick start but Baba came roaring back as two of the sport's strongest vied at mid-ring.

The Giant swung the tide at 13:34 and won the fall with a back breaker and atomic drop. Brisco had rarely been in such a position with his back firmly against the wall but the stout-hearted native of Blackwell, Oklahoma was far from through.

Jack weighing 236, squared accounts at 3:30 of the second fall with a figure fur leg lock.

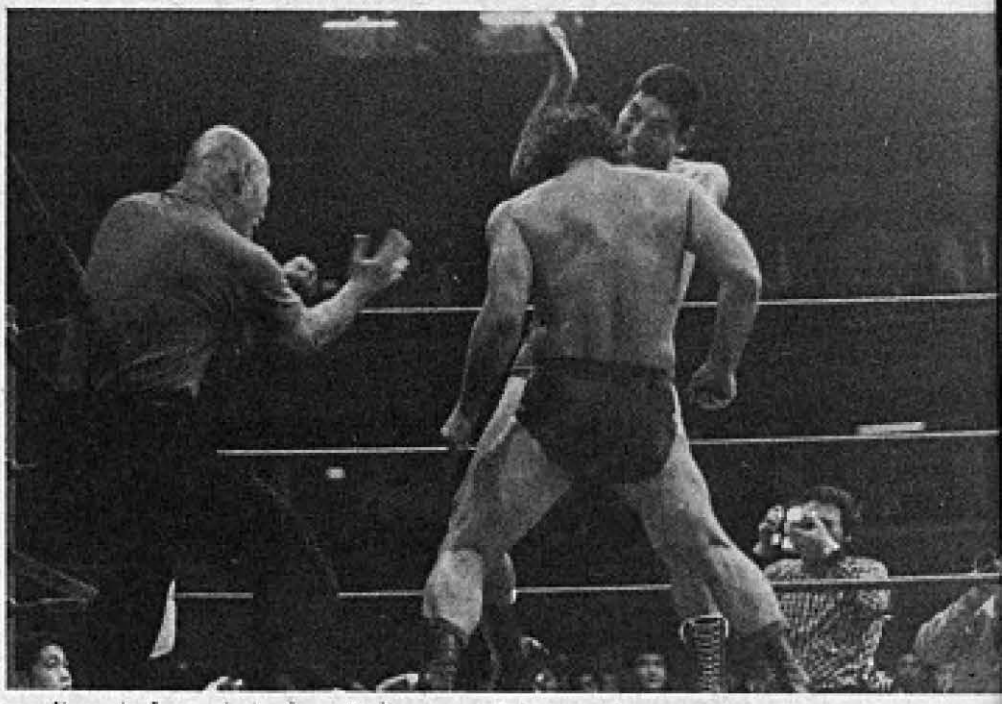
Buoyed by the comeback, Brisco MEBACK, Brisco
battled Baba on even terms in the deciding fall as the gathering filled the auditorium with chants of "Baba, Baba, Baba."

Baba now employed a variety of Boston Crab holds but Brisco was the aggressor, relying on body scissors and drop kicks.

Brisco proved his crown was strictly "on loan" as he won the third fall in 2:34 with a back body drop.

It was indeed an emotional victory for Brisco who appeared to shed tears of joy when referee Joe Huguchi raised his arm in the center of the ring and Lord Blears walked over to present him with the N.W.A. belt.

Thus ended Baba's reign as world champion — the shortest in the long history of the N.W.A. — but the Giant had the satisfaction of knowing he had defeated a great wrestler in two of three super showdowns.



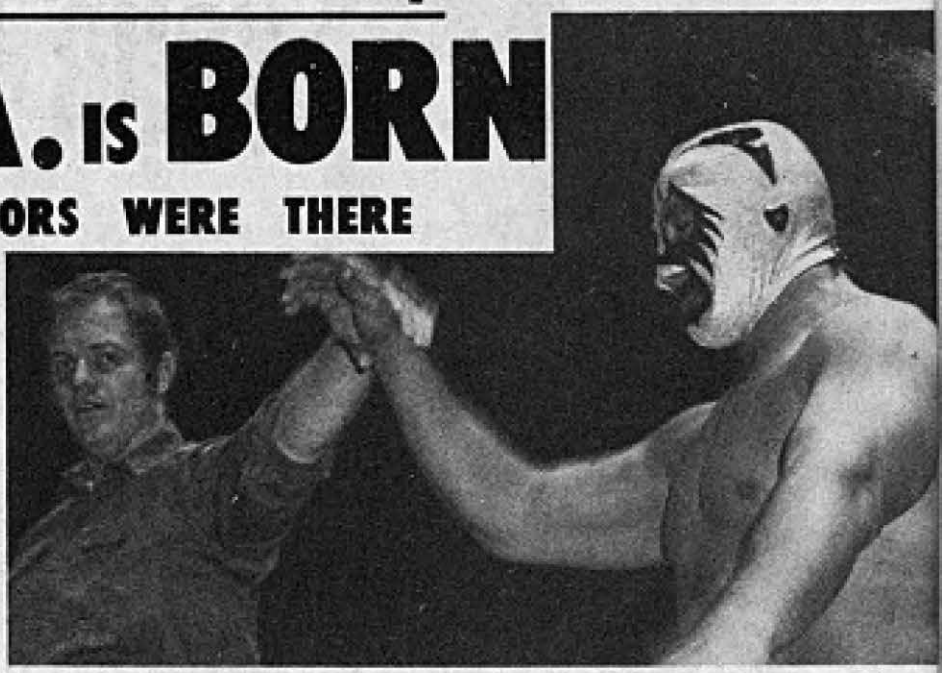
Standing six feet, six inches, Baba stuns Brisco with a painful "Giant Chop" to the head during the first fall.

BRISCO GETS ROUGHHOUSED IN FAR EAST

Mil Mascaras Crowned Champ

....THE I.W.A. IS BORN

AND OUR EDITORS WERE THERE



A new champion for a new association: Mil Mascaras, a flashy, well built athlete.

THE TIME: January 6, 1975.
THE PLACE; Savannah, Georgia
THE OCCASION; The birth of a new wrestling association.

Over 40 professional wrestlers began to gather in Savannah, Sunday, January 5, for the biggest wrestling card ever presented in the Georgia coastal city.

The super stars checking into the hotel across from the Civic Center sounded like the Who's Who of the professional sport.

Pro-Wrestling International Inc. President Robert Hatch and consultant Pedro Martinez welcomed the athletes and explained that the following day a wrestling tournament would start at seven o'clock to select a challenger to wrestle Mil Mascaras for the International Heavyweight Championship.

A mobile unit was on hand with fast and slow motion cameras to tape the evening's Spectacular. These tapes will be seen in every major city in the United States and Canada.

The wrestling aficionados had a field day with such stars as: The Mighty Igor, the Polish strong man who is definitely the strongest individual in professional wrestling. Igor thrilled the crowd with feats of strength before his matches.

Bulldog Brower, the Canadian champion who carries three hundred well distributed pounds of wild fury into the ring.

Mil Mascaras, the International Champion. A flashy well built athlete, who flew in from Mexico City after touring Europe and South America. Ox Baker, the giant sadist with the heart punch, whose bite is as bad as his bark.

Tex McKenzie, the lanky crowd-pleasing Texan, who will use his cowboy boots to cool an aggressive adversary.

Argentine Apollo, the acrobatic Latin whose constant movement keeps the fans standing during his bouts.

Louis Martinez, the Mexican fireball who brings the fans to lend him encouragement with his shouts of "Ariba".

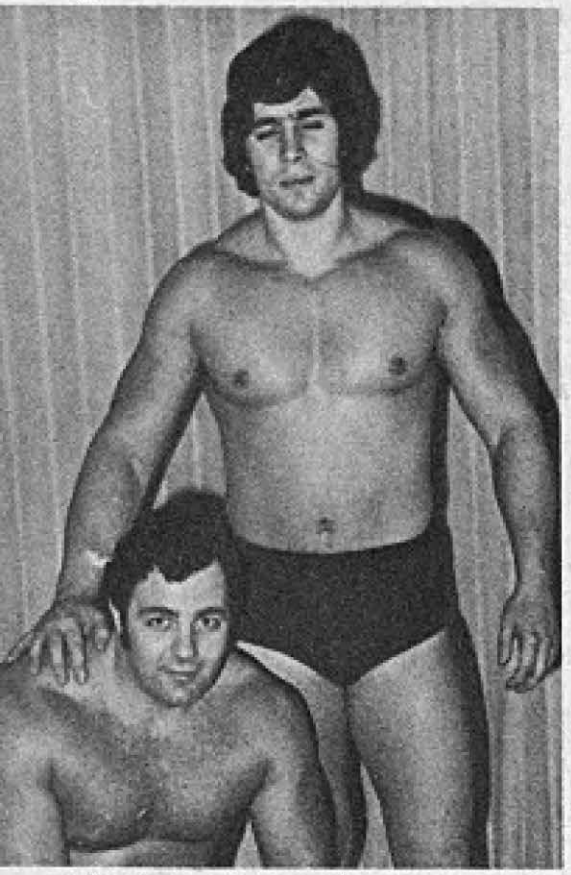
Rip Hawk, the golden hawk who never lets up until he has punished his opponent to the point of submission.

The flashy young "Italian connection" team of Gino Brito and Dino Bravo, who now make their home in Montreal, Canada. Canadian tag team champions, their goal is the International tag team title held by George Cannon's Mongols.

The Love Brothers, Reginald and Hartford, who have signed contracts with Al Costello the Fabulous Kangaroo, to manage them. The Mongols, present International Heavyweight champions who were managed by the manager of champions, George Cannon.

The wrestling ability of the Mongols plus the brain of the "Crybaby" should frustrate many a wrestling combination.

The evening's entertainment concluded at 11:30 P.M. Four and one half hours of exciting wrestling. This would be a monthly feature to be held in different towns. The birth of the I.W.A., the International Wrestling Association.



The young "Italian connection" team Gino Brito and Dino Bravo.

The Mighty Igor, the Polish strong man who is definitely the strongest individual in professional wrestling.

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A fabulous Saga

PLAYING SPORTS MADE MOOLAH A

The super talents of Moolah are world renowned and she is completely relaxed here before stepping into the ring for a match at the Korakuen Hall in Tokyo.

Coming up July 22 a raven-haired world celebrity named Lillian Ellison will celebrate a birthday. Just which one is up for conjecture but rest assured it has to be in the late forties or perhaps she is making a reluctant move into the half-century bracket.

Don't bother asking because Lillian ain't telling. Anyway, a guess has to be much more flattering when you orb her trim, compact figure.

Naturally, the name Lillian Ellison isn't going to send you scanning the nearest theater marquee but take another look... a long look... and that electric light in your dome turns on.

Miss Ellison is a household world in North America wherever wrestling aficionados gather, operating under the alias of The Fabulous Moolah... that's right, the world champeen of all the ladies.

Lillian, or Moolah if you prefer, is as perennial and durable on the throne as Mildred Burke once was in the late thirties, forties and into the early fifties.

Mildred the Magnificent took the distaff participation out of the seedy carnival atmosphere and put the sport on its way to univer-

WITH 13 BROTHERS NATURAL FOR MAT

by Jack Welsh

sal acceptance.

June Byers had long been in Miss Burke's shadow as an arch rival and when Mildred retired, the big blonde ascended to the crown.

Unfortunately, June ran into a young Moolah, aggressive, ambitious and on the upswing. Lillian was matched with 13 other girls in Baltimore in a Battle Royal to determine a challenger for Miss Byers.

After all the moans and groans had subsided, Miss Ellison's arm was raised as the winner and the roaring reaction of the crowd immediately heralded a new star loaded with talent and charisma.

Lillian then went against Miss Byers for the title and she wrapped it up in two straight falls. Prior to the Battle Royal stepping stone, Miss Ellison was wrestling as "Slave GirlMoolah."

Lillian had picked up this sobriquet in Johannesburg, South Africa, at the insistence of promoter Tiger Simpson when she was first breaking into the game.

This young woman with the soft drawl out of Columbia, S.C. weighed just 110 pounds in those days.

The night aah won the title in 1958, the Maryland Athletic Commission informed me that my name 'Slave Girl Moolah' was a little misleading and would I please change it. I was so happy I would have agreed to almost anything."

One official pointed out that beating 13 girls in one night was quite fabulous "so may be we'll call you The Fabulous Moolah."

Lillian gave the commission brass her best winning smile, nodding her head in approval.

Today The Fabulous Moolah is loved and hated at the same time... coast to coast, north and south ... but she is a super box office draw and the end obviously is nowhere in sight.

Probing as to why she continues in such a demanding sport when she already has fame, fortune and certain financial security will get you a wide smile from this engaging young lady.

"Why do I do it? Well, because aah luuhv it! I love to travel, I love the money and I love meeting people. Naturally, there is always the risk of getting hurt and I haven't avoided it but I feel it is worth every minute I have put into my career."

There was a night in Denver when Moolah fractured her neck when an opponent jammed her head into the mat. She still has to visit a chiropractor from time to time.

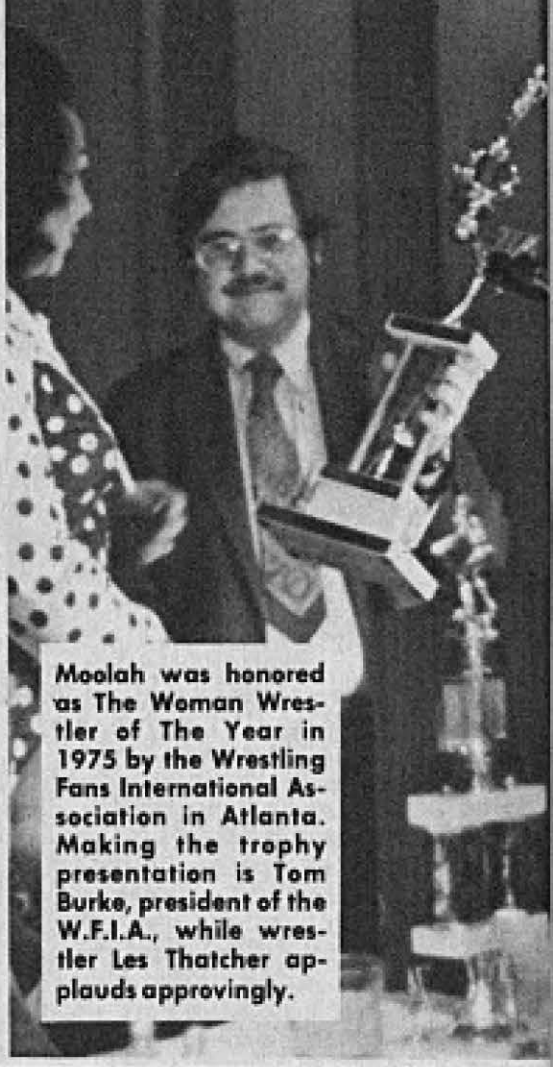
"I've had all my fingers and toes broken at one time or the other. This scar on my lip — I got that when a girl rammed my face into a turnbuckle. And there was another match when an opponent ground my head into a turnbuckle and cut me over my forehead all the way down to my cheek. In wrestling all that glitters isn't gold, honey."

Moolah also was rushed to a hospital once when the officials feared she had ruptured her spleen. Fortunately, it wasn't anything worse than internal bruises.

Even if she finds the going rough in the future, nothing is likely to ever surpass a wild night

Admiring her trophy, the Fabulous Moolah discusses the award with mat colleague Dottie Downs who often pairs with the champion in tag matches.

Two of sports' greatest champions compared notes when The Fabulous Moolah, world's woman wrestling champion, met with Rocky Marcicano, who retired undefeated as the world's heavyweight boxing champion in 1956 and was tragically killed in an Iowa plane crash in August, 1969.



Moolah was honored as The Woman Wrestler of The Year in 1975 by the Wrestling Fans International Association in Atlanta. Making the trophy presentation is Tom Burke, president of the W.F.I.A., while wrestler Les Thatcher applauds approvingly.

CHAMP MADE RING DEBUT IN SO. AFRICA

in Oklahoma City years ago.

"I was wrestling a full-blooded Indian girl named Celia Blevins. After I beat her, I started back to the dressing room when I spot this Indian guy — he was the biggest man I had ever seen — coming at me with a knife. He lunged and took a swipe at me, cutting me on the shoulder. I'm sure happy the crowd got him away before anything else happened."

Growing up with 13 brothers, Moolah didn't have to seek athletics — it was practically forced upon her.

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LOVES MONEY, TRAVEL, NEW FACES IN GAME

"When I was a little girl back in Columbia I used to go to the country fairs and win all the medals in track, high jumpin', just about everything. And most of the time I beat the boys."

Moolah's mother died when she was eight and to help ease the pain of such a great loss so young, her father took her to all kinds of events. One night they went to a wrestling match and though the Ellison family didn't know it at the time, it was the conception of a great career.

"I remember turning to my daddy, saying "That's what I want to be... a lady wrestler," The Fabulous one recalls.

Moolah never detoured from her course. When she entered high school she was always bugging the wrestling coach for a tryout.

It was in South Africa that she met Tiger Simpson, the promoter. Right off the bat, she started pressuring him for a pro match.

"You don't know enough and you're not big enough," was his counter message.

Moolah was undaunted.

"I'm willing to learn and I'll get bigger. I won't weigh 110 forever."

When Moolah told Simpson she was small but she was mighty, she finally won him over.

It was in Johannesburg that Lillian was dubbed "Slave Girl Moolah".

"We're gonna have to change that name of yours... Lillian Ellison just doesn't sound like a wrestler," Simpson explained.

"I don't care what you call me —just so I can wrestle and make some money. Remember, I came from a family of 13 brothers and we had to fight for every biscuit."

Simpson paused for a minute.

"So you want to make some moolah, eh! Would you mind if we called you 'Slave Girl Moolah'?"

Moolah agreed and campaigned in Johannesburg for six months before returning to the United States.

"I had a big match coming up in Boston and although I now weighed 118 pounds, I couldn't pass the weight test. Most of the lady wrestlers were big girls in those days. The promoter said I'd never get a match unless I weighed at least 138 pounds, so I might as well go home. I said I would be back so don't forget me."

Moolah became Lillian Ellison again as she returned to Columbia but wrestling was never out of her mind.

She had her own weight-building diet — steaks with mash potatoes and plenty of butter. Lillian also drank pure cream mixed with Hershey syrup and three raw eggs.

One day the southern belle picked up the phone and called Billy Wolfe.

"You may not remember me, Mr. Wolfe, but you told me to forget about wrestling and become a secretary. Well, I now weigh 149 pounds and I want to wrestle."

Wolfe had no choice but to give her the green light.

"In the beginning I was too gentle with my opponents because I wanted everybody to love me. Finally I decided that wasn't my style and I decided to be like I was with my brothers.

When I am wrestling I always let myself go. Of course, there are rules but most of the time I lose my head and just ignore the rules if I can get away with it."

The Fabulous Moolah's role of a mat vixen has irritated many fans throughout the country but when she unleashes her spectacular style in the ring there are just as many singing her praises.

Moolah's meticulous about her appearance in and out of the ring. Not so long ago she had a championship match with Vicki Williams in Madison Square Garden.

On the afternoon of the match she visted the famous salon of Mr.

Mildred Burked retired as undefeated world's woman champion in the early fifties and was succeeded by June Byers who lost the crown to The Fabulous Moolah in Baltimore in 1958.

BOTH HEROINE VIXEN TO N.Y. GARDEN FANS

Bertrand on Fifth Avenue to have her hair done.

Emerging from the salon to hail a taxi for the Garden, Moolah excitedly exclaimed, "Oh, I really feel like a lady again."

The early crowd was spreading outside the Garden and Moolah decided to use the 33rd street entrance.

Always quick afoot, the champion managed to get inside as the crowd surged toward her, pleading for an autograph.

"You're our girl, Moolah! Go get her, champ."

By the time a crowd of 16,000 found its way into the Garden, it was a divided house. Normally, Moolah wears gold lame in the ring but for this encounter she was covered by sequined tights in the multi-colors of the rainbow.

As Moolah pranced around the ring with her hands on her hips, Vicki Williams came into the arena, decked out in royal blue.

Since she is younger and probably because she is prettier, Miss Williams received a rousing ovation. Yet she was still the underdog.

Vicki has met Moolah many times but she has never defeated the queen of the mat although dishing out the ultimate in punishment, particularly with her patented drop kick.

The next time Moolah makes a junket to Japan she will probably have to face pretty Miyoko Hoshino, considered by the majority as the mat queen of the Far East.

On this particular night, both Vicki and Moolah took turns gaining the advantage but the olive-skinned champion repeatedly broke every rule in the book with such dastardly deeds as kicking her opponent in the head and stomach.

Moolah also pulled Vicki's hair but the blonde called on her youth to recuperate and trapped the pride of Columbia, S.C. with a head lock, smashed her into the ropes and then sent Moolah reeling in a perfect set up for a punishing scissors hold around the neck.

Using all her guile and cunning to escape the referee's count of "three", Moolah turns the tables on Vicki and suddenly it's all over, Miss Williams succumbing to a leg scissors she had on the champion only minutes before.

The once vociferous fans are now stunned into silence over the quick change of events. And Moolah, waving to one and all, jauntily heads back to her dressing room with her crown in tact.

"I just luuuhv wrestlin... It's been so good to me. I hope I never lose my title. Never in my life. My God, this is the best thing I got."

And so it is, Moolah! You are truly Fabulous... whatever your birthday calendar says...

During the W.F.I.A. convention in Atlanta last year a good time was had by all including (left to right) Dottie Downs, The Fabulous Moolah, Tom Burke, Dave Burginski and Mr. Wrestling II.

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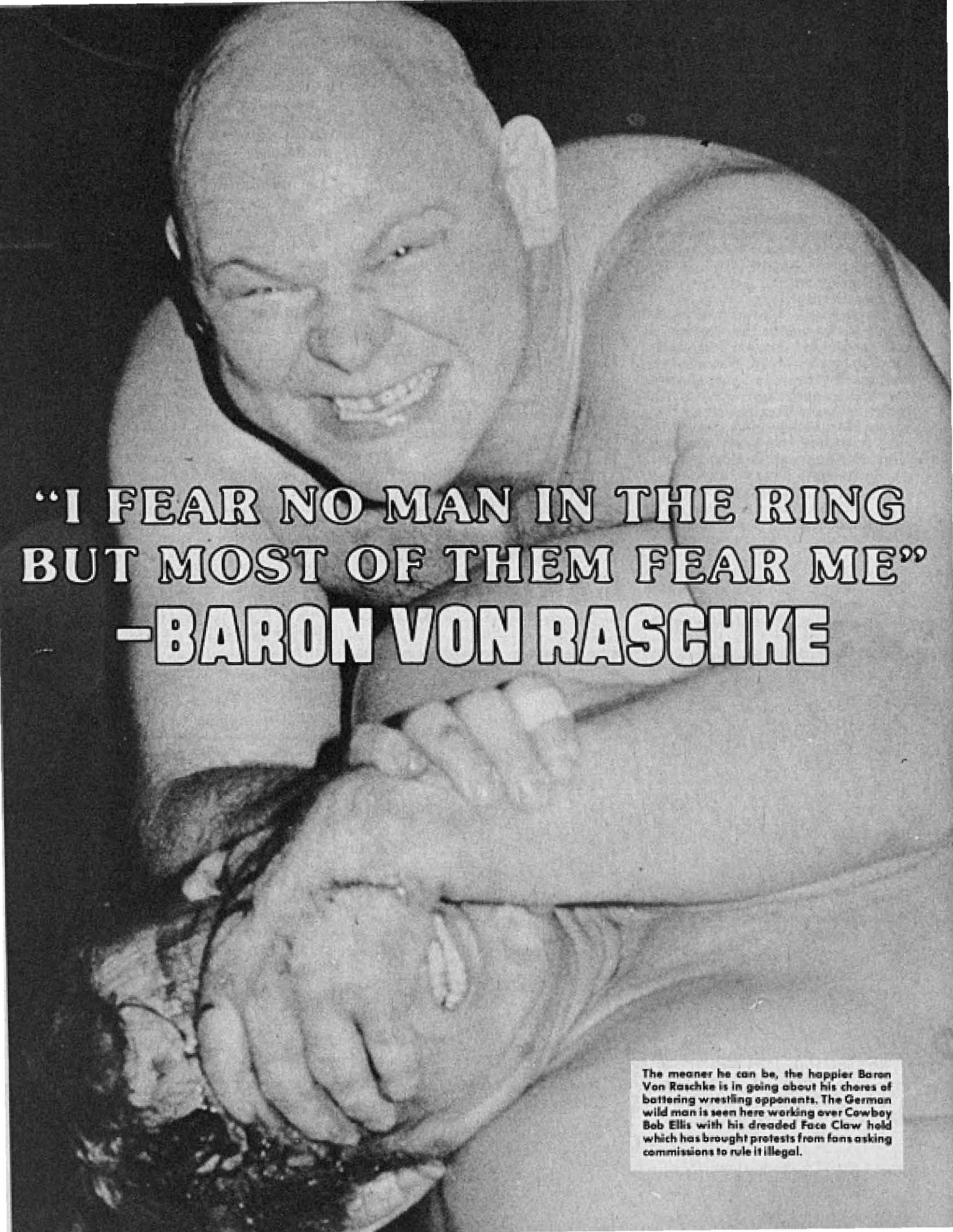

The meaner he can be, the happier Baron Von Raschke is in going about his chores of battering wrestling opponents. The German wild man is seen here working over Cowboy Bob Ellis with his dreaded Face Claw hold which has brought protests from fans asking commissions to rule it illegal.

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During the twenties, thirties and right up until World War II, the late Eric Von Stroheim was the epitome of the arch villain on movie screens across the land.

Stroheim, a superior actor and director, was perfectly cast as the German general or lurking international spy... the man with the bald pate, perpetual scowl and gutteral dialogue was a perfect blend.

By John Williams

The stocky European didn't have the savoir-faire of a Sidney Greenstreet but he didn't need it. Von Stroheim's appearances assured the film a box office plus as he presented a strange degree of menacing charisma.

Should Hollywood ever elect to do Eric's biography on celluloid, there is only one person who could capture Von Stroheim as a young man.

BARON VON RASCHKE

Von Raschke even bears a resemblance to the noted actor, complete with built-in leer and grimaces.

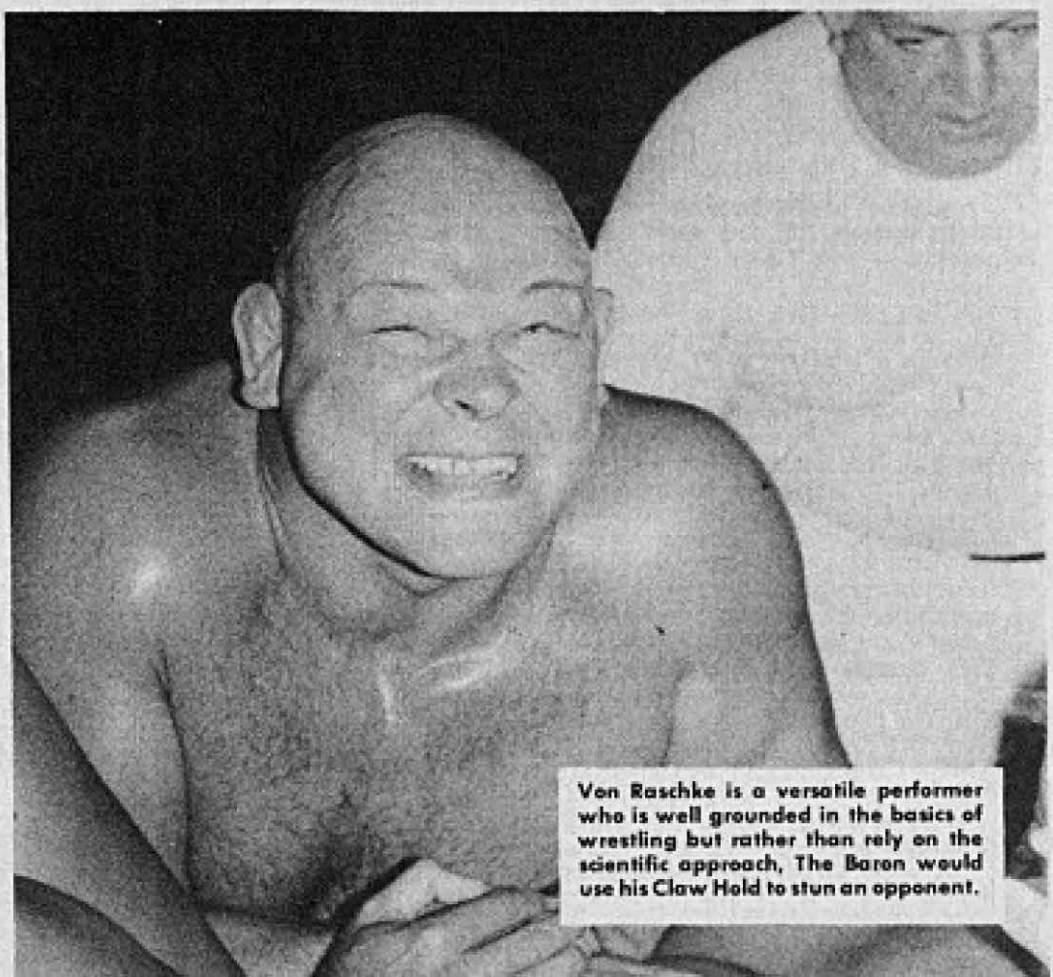
Yet The Baron's demanding commitments in world wrestling would hardly give him much time to opt for a film assignment.

Like Von Stroheim, Von Raschke has been much maligned by the patrons who make the turnstiles hum, particularly of being a real life spy for East or West Germany — take you pick — who is using wrestling as a cover.

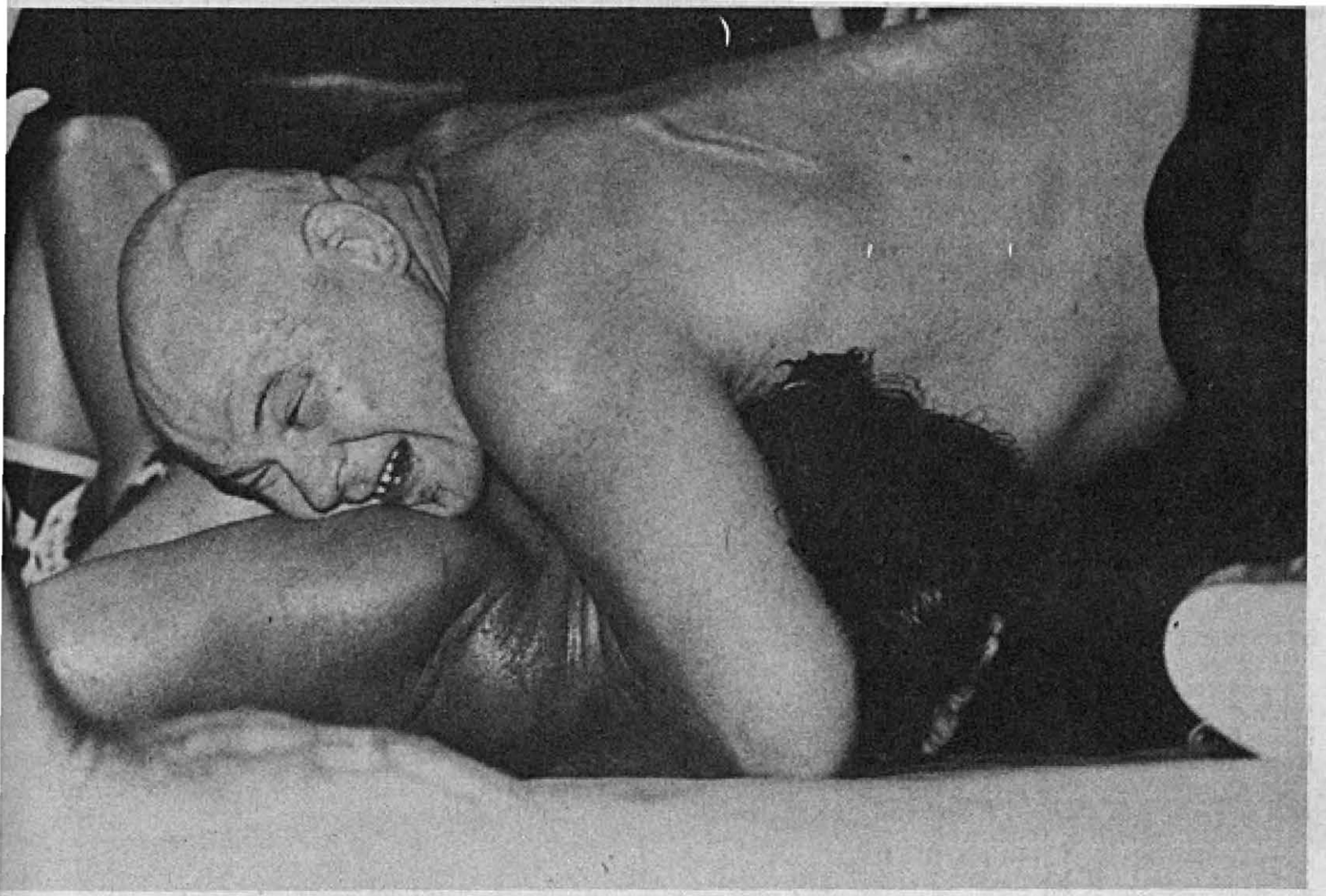
The Baron finds much humor in such accusations, particularly since it helps build his image as one of the sport's super villains.

"The public has called me everything in the book but I don't mind just as long as they keep talking about me. One elderly lady once said to my face that I was a Nazi who escaped from Berlin after the war. When you consider World War II was over 30 years ago, I was probably the only Nazi wearing diapers."

VON RASCHKE CONSIDERS VERNE GAGNE AS MOST TOP TUTOR



Von Raschke is a versatile performer who is well grounded in the basics of wrestling but rather than rely on the scientific approach, The Baron would use his Claw Hold to stun an opponent.



The Baron goes all out with painful pressure as he traps Ellis with a headlock and some hair-pulling for good measure which the referee can't see.

VOWS TO NEVER FACE ANOTHER GRIZZLY

Von Raschke does nothing to change people's opinion regarding his villainy. The Baron goes out of his way to incense the crowds wherever he appears and since the gatherings are usually sellouts, the spectator reaction sometimes borders on near-riots.

One of The Baron's stock-in-trades is his dreaded Claw Hold which he usually applies to an opponent's face. It is a vice-like grip and if a ring rival doesn't submit, he is usually rendered unconscious.

"All those cracks people make about me being a Nazi are just because they are jealous... they are frustrated in watching me destroy their idols week after week. I guess you can't blame them but when you are the greatest wrestler in the world, which I unquestionably am, there's nothing that can be done about it. I fear no man in the ring today but most of them certainly fear me."

Von Raschke is well grounded in the fundamentals of wrestling but he would rather gouge eyes, kick, stomp and bite an adversary into defeat in his modus operandi of "win anyway you can."

Von Raschke is currently the No. 1 challenger for Verne Gagne's American Wrestling Association championship.

And whenever The Baron and Gagne meet in the ring, it is a perfect example of biting the hand that feeds you.

When he was in his early twenties, Von Raschke graduated from the University of Nebraska after an impressive mat career in N.C.A.A. competition.

The last name was just Raschke then and the 282-pound terror hadn't added the "Von", which was synonymous with the Rhineland, and naturally enhance the young man's "German background."

Von Raschke sought the advice of Gagne because he considered the former Minnesota All-American in football and wrestling as the most knowledgeable tutor on the fine points of the sport.

Gagne has always been a gentleman who is willing to impart his wrestling techniques on to other young aspirants, particularly if the student displays a talent natural for the game. There was no questioning Von Raschke's potential.

Verne also had his pupil work out with many of the top stars on the A.W.A. circuit and Von Raschke learned quickly.

In fairness to Von Raschke, the

RANKED NO. 1 FOR GAGNE'S TITLE

self-styled German has barred no opponent in his drive to the pinnacle among world heavyweights.

Bruno Sammartino, Dory Funk, Jr., Pat O'Connor and Edouard Carpentier are just a handful of the super stars Von Raschke has tested over the years.

Naturally, The Baron got around to getting a shot at Gagne's A.W.A. crown. The match was set for Comiskey Park in Chicago in 1970 and 30,000 fans turned out, paying $148,000.

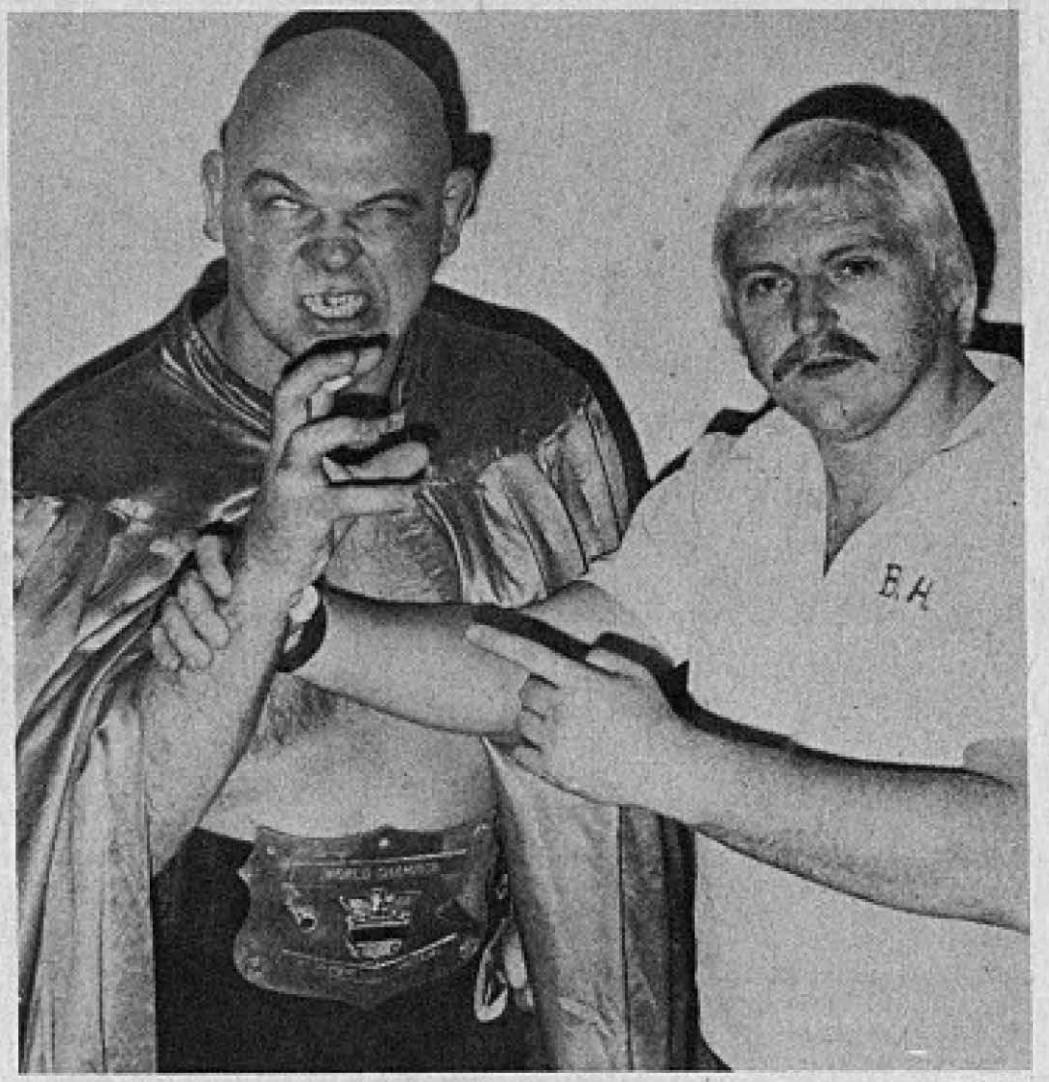
It was a wild and wooly affair with Von Raschke trying every misdeed he had ever learned against one of the greatest champions of all time.

Powerful as the German was, Gagne was just a little too swift and too skillful and Verne successfully defended his championship.

Breaking attendance records as well as opponents' bones is a penchant Von Raschke thoroughly enjoys, principally because it swells his coffers to the near six-figure mark.

The Baron had made all the major stops in North America and erased marks in such cities as Detroit, Minneapolis, St. Louis, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Houston, Dallas, Kansas City, Des Moines, Ft. Worth, Los Angeles, Montreal and Quebec City.

Von Raschke even teamed up with his manager, Bobby Heenan,



Von Raschke appears to be in a trance of pure viciousness as his manager, Bobby Heenan, holds up the right hand which inflicts the punishing Face Claw.

to wrestle the famous bear, Terrible Teddy, in Detroit.

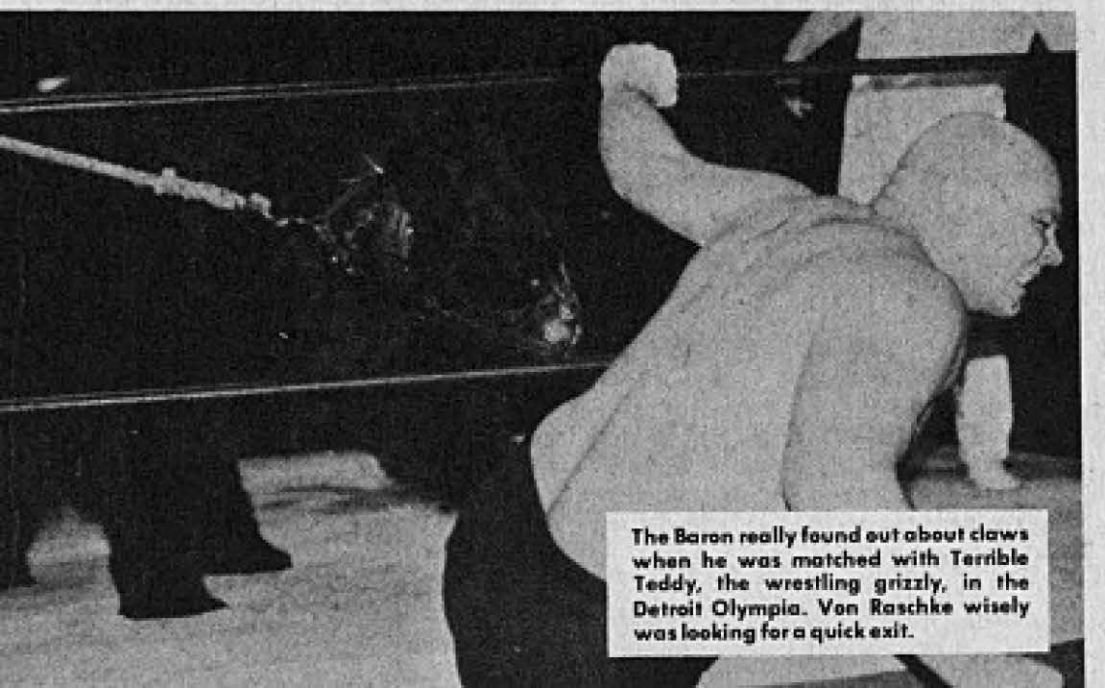
The attraction drew 11,000 fans to the Olympia arena and this dangerous duo went through with the match even though Von Raschke complained "it was just a trick to get us killed so they can hand over the championship to Dick The Bruiser."

The Bruiser did have something to do with the matchup because it was he who drew Von Raschke's name out of a hat from among numerous wrestlers who had volunteered to face the brown grizzly.

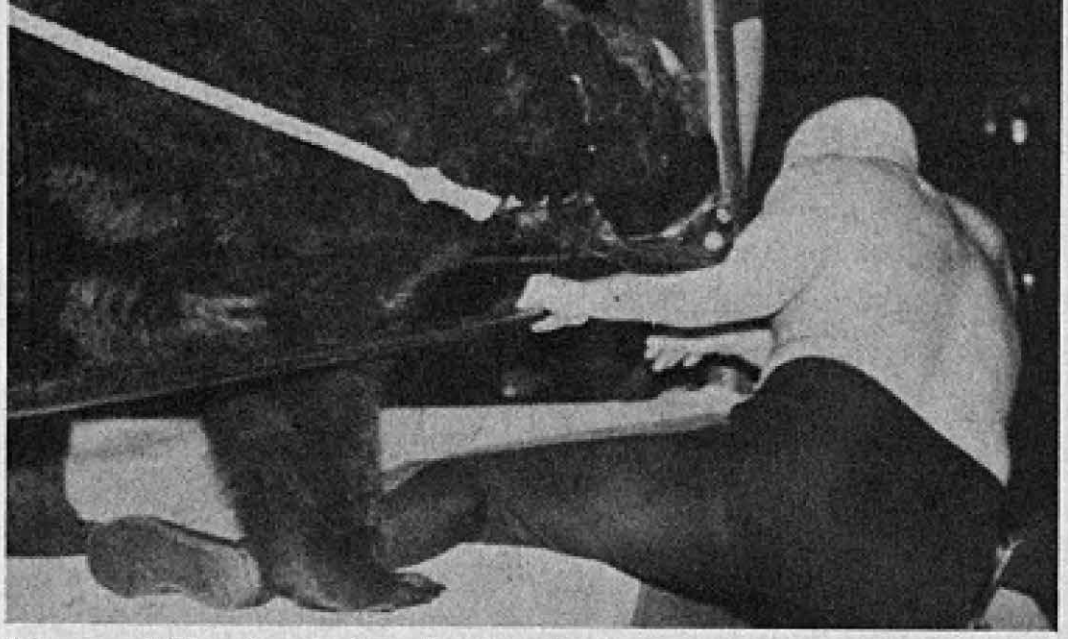
Terrible Teddy was no stranger to the ring and he took turns chasing Heenan and Von Raschke in and out of the squared circle.

When The Baron tried to get a headlock, the bear just jerked his head and sent Von Raschke flying across the ring. Heenan also met the same fate.

Finally Terrible Teddy got both wrestlers on the mat and sat on



The Baron really found out about claws when he was matched with Terrible Teddy, the wrestling grizzly, in the Detroit Olympia. Von Raschke wisely was looking for a quick exit.



It is a good thing that the brawling bear had to wear a muzzle. Otherwise The Baron might have been minus an arm today.

HAPPY OVER ARCH VILLAIN RING STATUS

them. Neither Heenan nor Von Raschke could budge as the referee counted both men out.

The Baron summed it up rather succinctly:

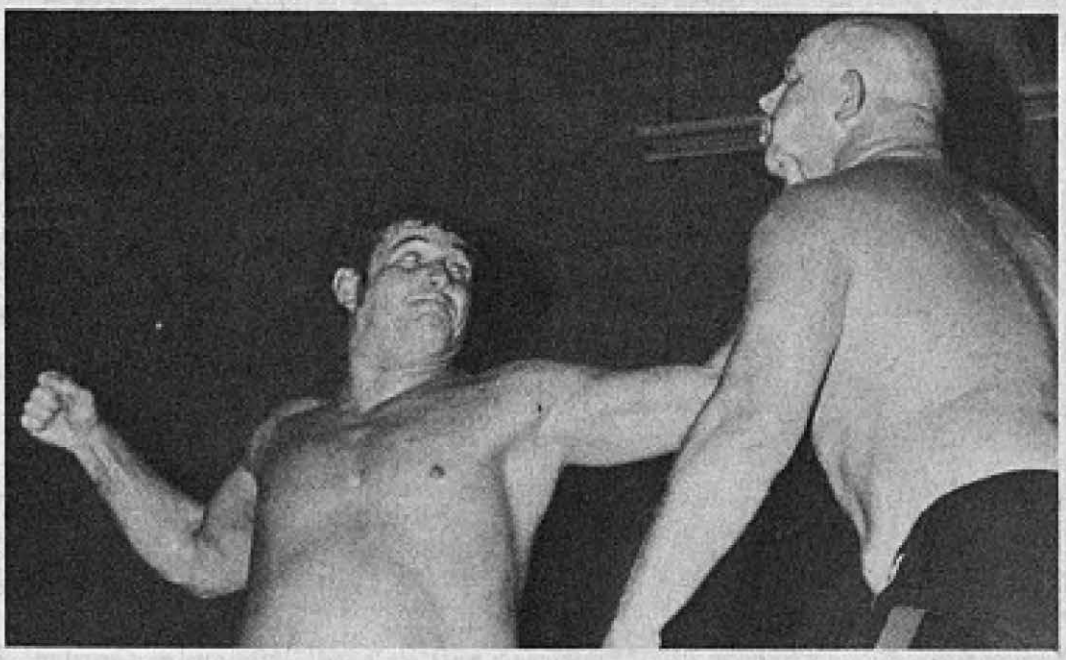
"Mahh Gawd, he ain't human."

Maybe not but Terrible Teddy celebrated his victory by drinking a bottle of beer in the ring.

Von Raschke and Heenan were both bloodied with head cuts at the finish and while they will take on any wrestlers in the world, bar none, they have wisely agreed never to tangle with a bear again.

"We got suckered into that match but never again," Von Raschke said, "But at least he didn't call me a Nazi."

Seig Heil!



Cowboy Ellis is the type of wrestler who can take it and then dish it out in spades. Bob adjusts Von Raschke's jaw as he prepares to uncork a smashing right hand to the head.

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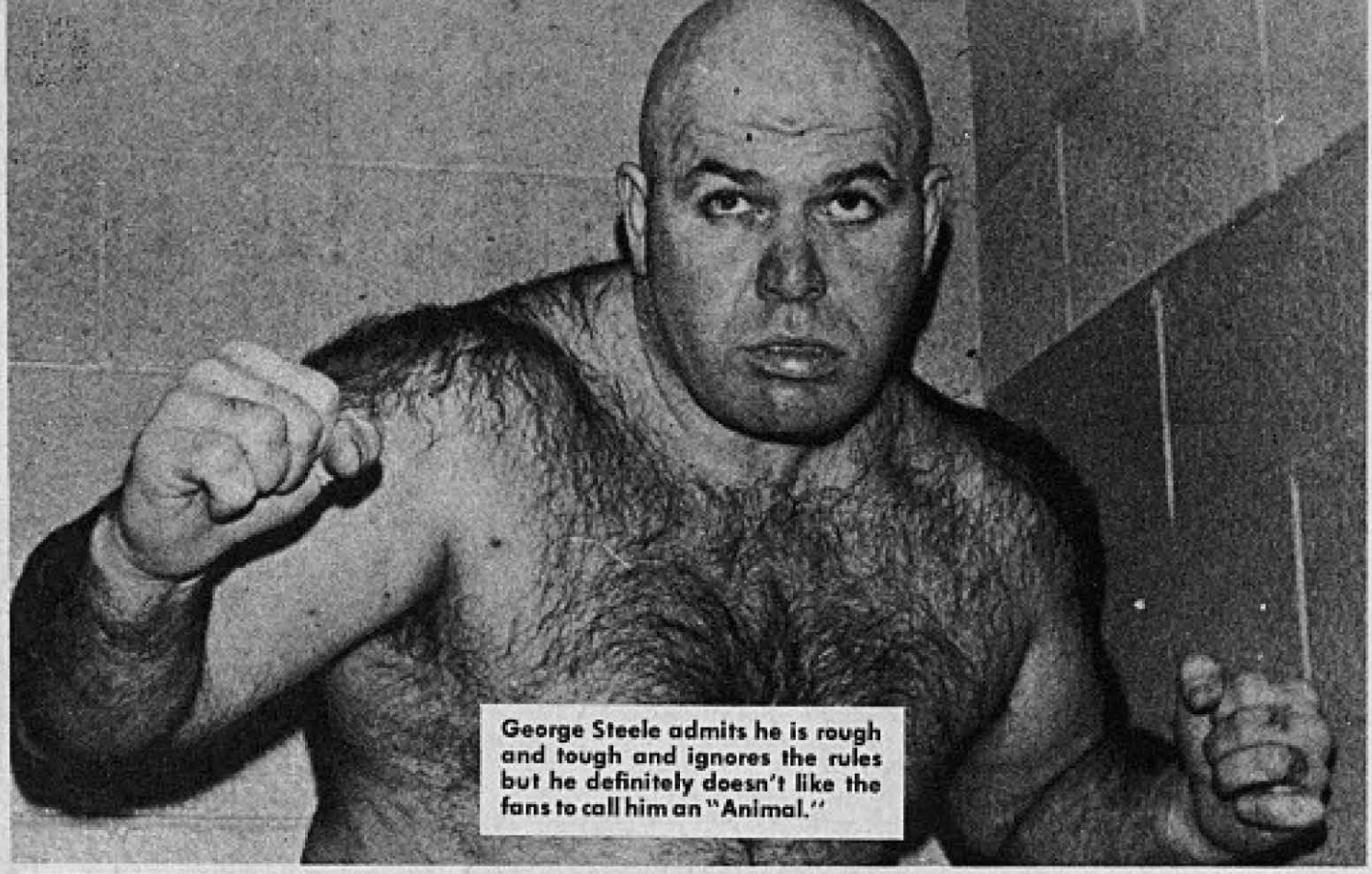
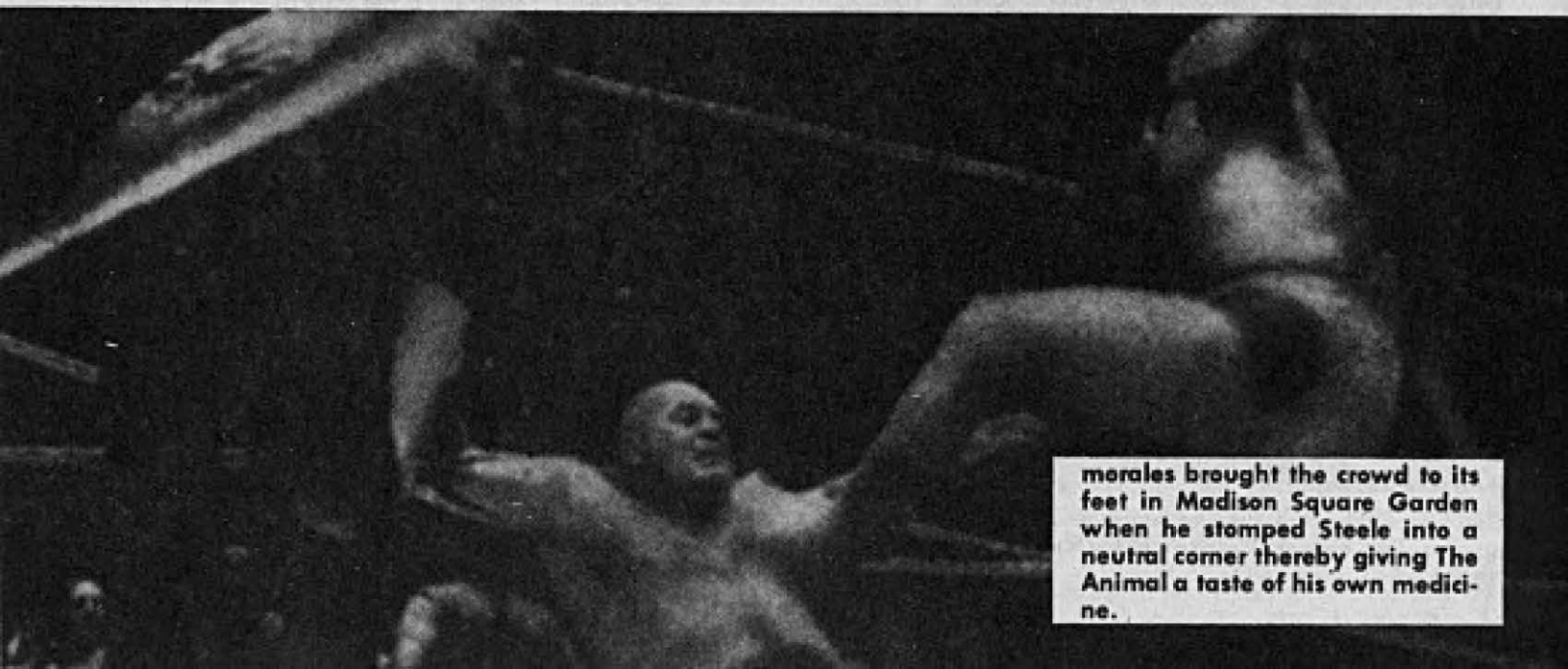


George Steele admits he is rough and tough and ignores the rules but he definitely doesn't like the fans to call him an "Animal."

GEORGE STEELE

is he an animal who should really be caged?



morales brought the crowd to its feet in Madison Square Garden when he stomped Steele into a neutral corner thereby giving The Animal a taste of his own medicine.

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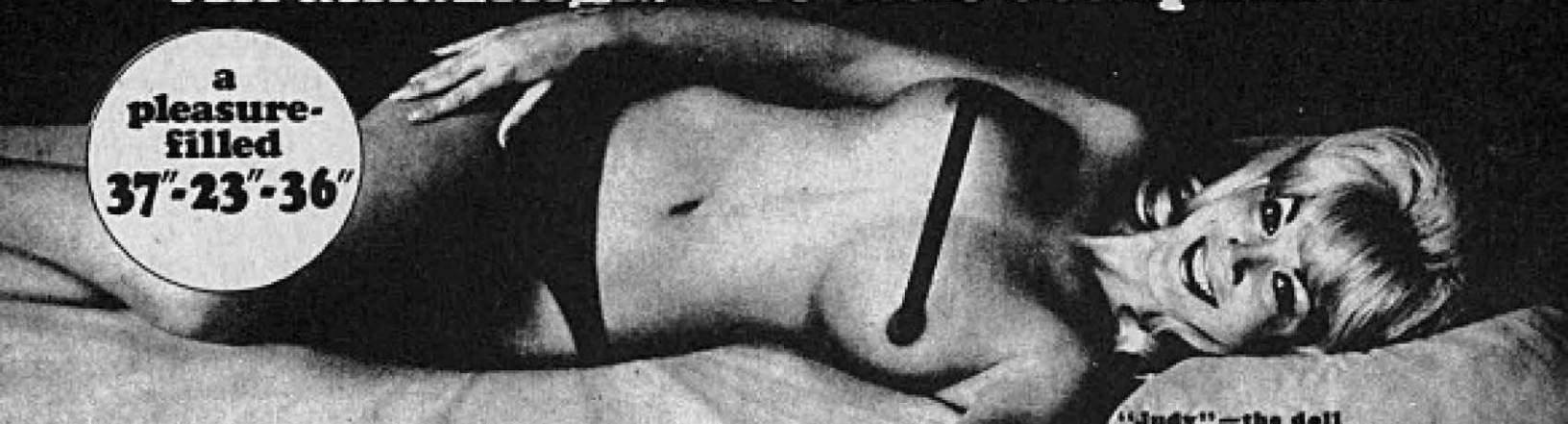

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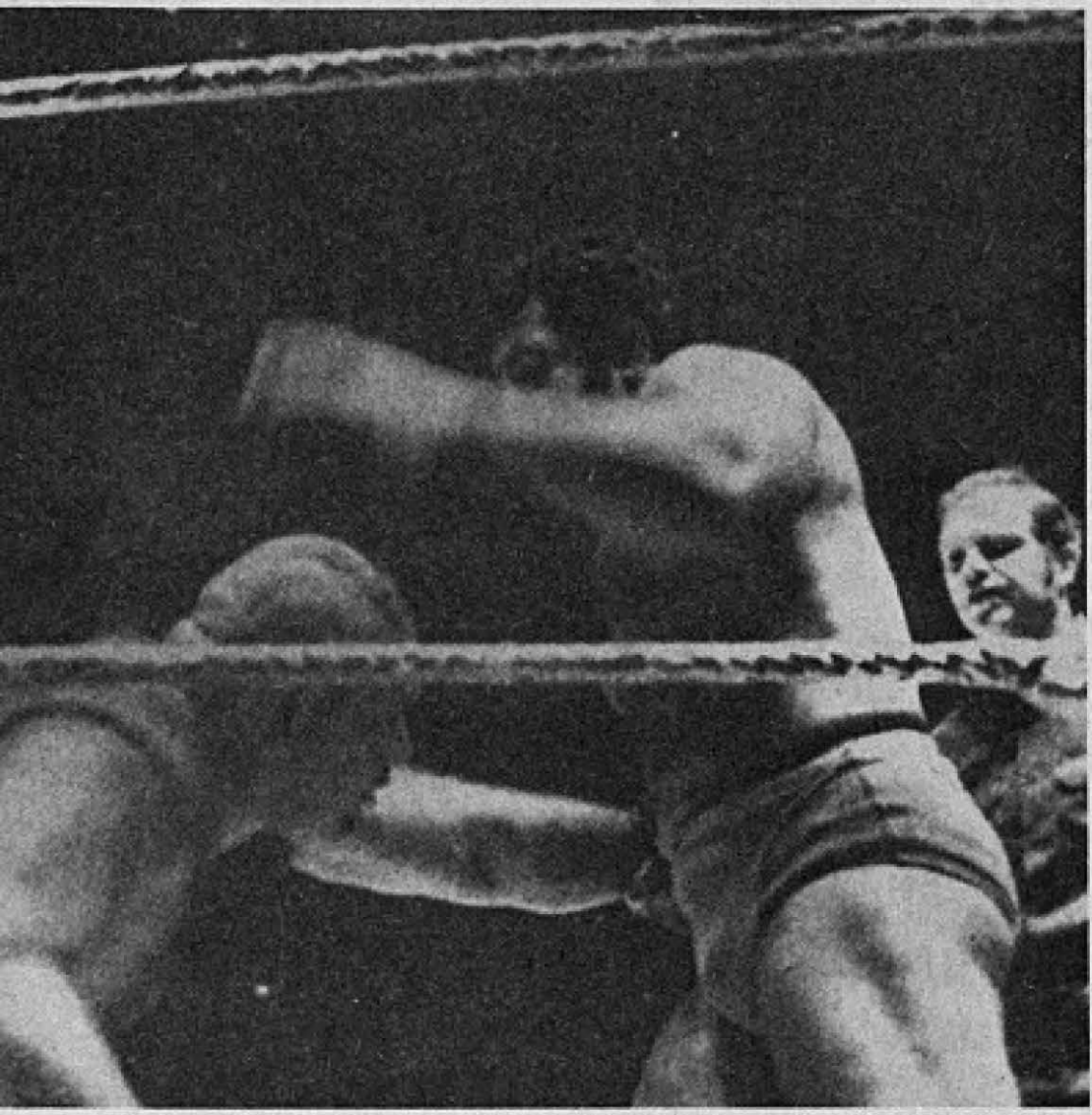
George Steele looks mean, he acts mean and he is mean. . . hence the sobriquet, "The Animal."

Few professional wrestlers convey a more menacing appearance than this six-foot-plus goliath who weighs in at 290 pounds.

Despite his famed desire to win any way he can, Steele doesn't relish the tag, "Animal" but the devotees of the sport just won't let him forget.



Pedro Morales gives Steele a series of rights and lefts that sends him to the canvas and though "The Animal" recovered he was unable to defeat the then World Wide Wrestling Federation heavyweight champion.

George is much in demand in all major cities in the United States but wherever he has appeared, the fans have been appalled at his undue viciousness in defeating his opponents.

Steele makes no effort to hide his basic philosophy in wrestling:

"There is no question I am the best pro wrestler anywhere. If fans think I hurt my opponents more than I should... they are wrong. I'm out to demolish and annihilate them in every match. The more I smash them the better I like it. I want them to remember me and fear me because fear is half the battle."

Physically, Steele is perfect to let the opponents and fans know what to expect from him.

George shaves his head and his powerful body is covered with hair. Before the bell rings, Steele cowers in his corner, rolling his eyes back and forth and letting his tongue stick out from the side of his mouth.

The Animal is here... so one and all must fear.

Steele likes to show fear just before a match begins.

"That is my reverse psychology. If my opponent thinks he has me shivering in my shoes, he gets overconfident. Then when the bell rings, I'm ready, he is not. Then it is only a short time before he's lying face down, a beaten hulk."

Steele could be a scientific brawler but he would rather be rough, tough and mean with no regard for the rules nor the referee.

Even if he does display such emotion, George doesn't like to hear the ringsider chant, "Animal, Animal, Animal," as he belabors a mat rival.

"Listen, let's get one thing straight, I'm no animal. The name is Mr. Steele... George Steele, professional wrestler, get it! That putrid nickname has been following me for nearly most of my career. My opponents who couldn't take it started it and the fans picked it up. My opponents fear me and they can't take it... they're jealous of me. I'm the better man and they just can't stand it."

George contends Bruno Sammartino, the W.W.W.F. heavyweight champion, is the biggest offender of them all.

"When I first wrestled him, Sammartino shook so much he called me an animal. I wrestled him in the very first match in the new Madison Square Garden."

Steele has met Sammartino many times, including championship matches going back to 1967. George has come out second best but he doesn't elaborate since he was disqualified in most of these encounters.

Since he won his first pro match with Klondike Bill in Cedar Rapids, Iowa 15 years ago, Steele estimates he has won 75 per cent of his bouts. George cites most of the defeats as coming via disqualification.

RIVALS, FANS PROTEST WILD RING ANTICS

ARGUES BRUNO SAMMARTINO CREATED NAME

"I don't consider being disqualified a loss anyway. I have been disqualified in most of my matches because when I get rougher than my opponents, the referee is quick to pick on me. Just on my reputation alone the referee is quick to judge."

If the fans thinks he is really an animal nothing irritates Steele more than a reluctant opponent when the going gets rough.

"I come to wrestle and I suddenly find my opponent lying in the ring scared to get up on his feet. This really bugs me. If he is scared to wrestle then he should get out of wrestling and take up knitting or something and leave wrestling to real men."

A native of Detroit, Steel was a top-flight wrestler and football player in high school and later won a scholarship to Michigan State University.

George also played briefly with the Buffalo Bills before he decided he could make more money in pro wrestling.

Early in his career, Steele was managed by Gary Hart and he wore a mask, wrestling as The Student. George selected the hood — not because he was shy — since he didn't want his opponents to see how mean and fearsome he appeared.

Though The Animal has unleashed his fury against the greatest stars in the game, he has never won any type of championship.

"Look at the ratings and the name of George Steele is always there. That makes me main event class. Which means top money against the top wrestlers. Sure I would like to be World Champion or U.S. Champion or any of those big titles but it has never happened. The reason is simple. All

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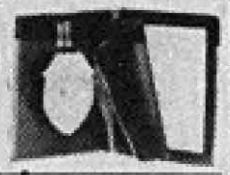

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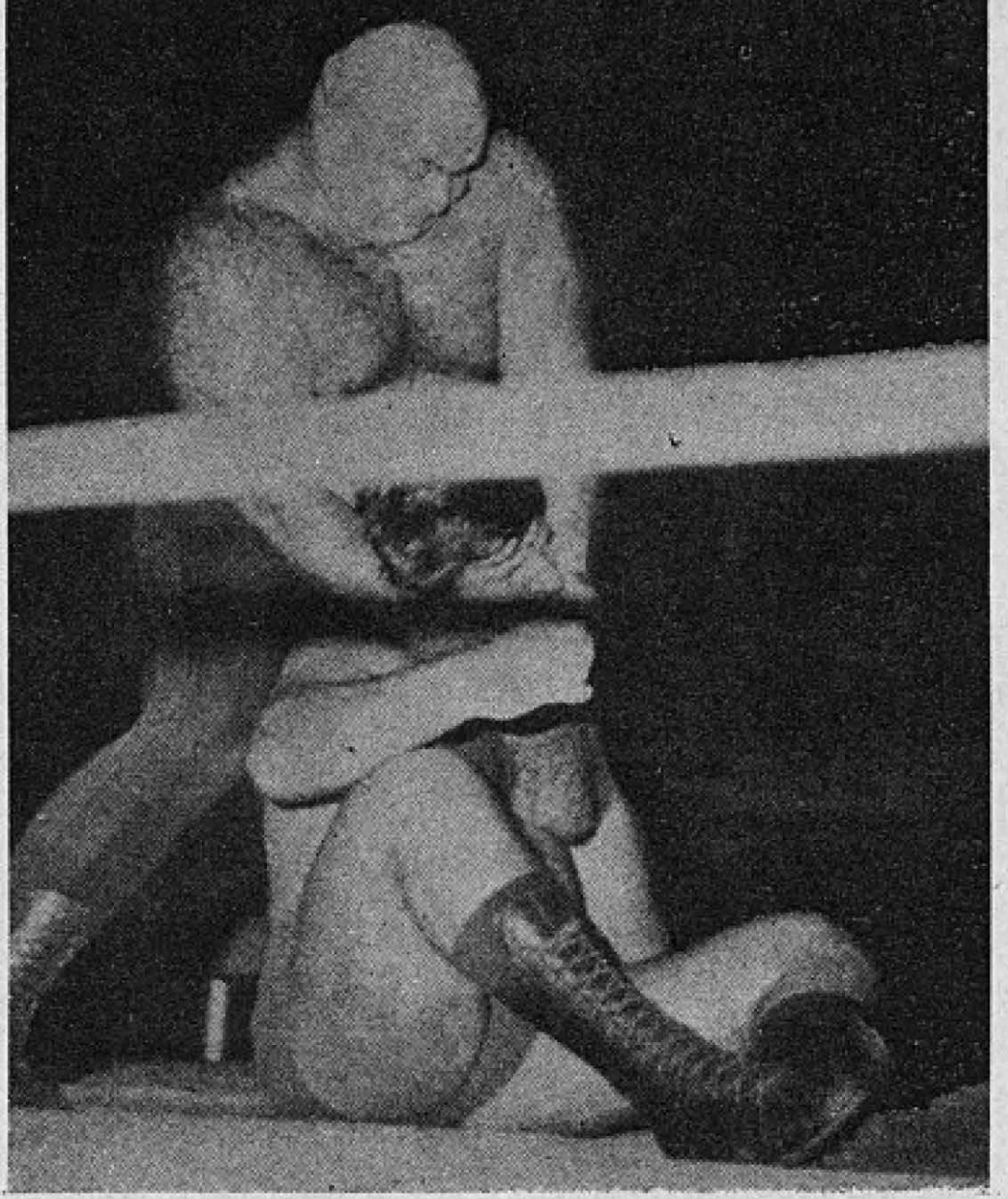


The former Michigan State grid star uses all his 290 pounds to put intense pressure on equally powerful Bruno Sammartino, the current World Wide Wrestling Federation's heavyweight champion.

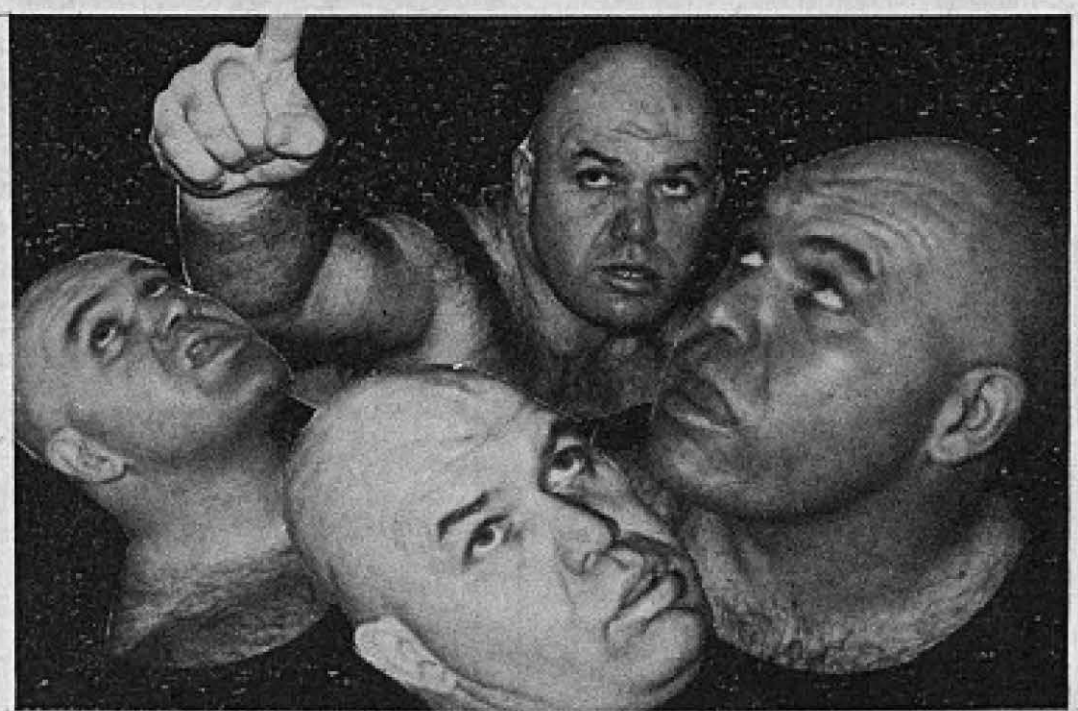
these so-called champions are afraid of me. They don't want to meet me. If and when I do get a chance to wrestle for a title I lose by some stupid ruling or get disqualified."

George Steele is a loner. He prefers single bouts to tag team. George points out, "I like to win my own bouts. I feel I'm above anyone else. I also don't trust anyone but myself. I teamed with Baron Scicluna the longest. That was over a year ago. The Mongols were the tag champions then but they refused to meet us. Give me a single bout anytime."

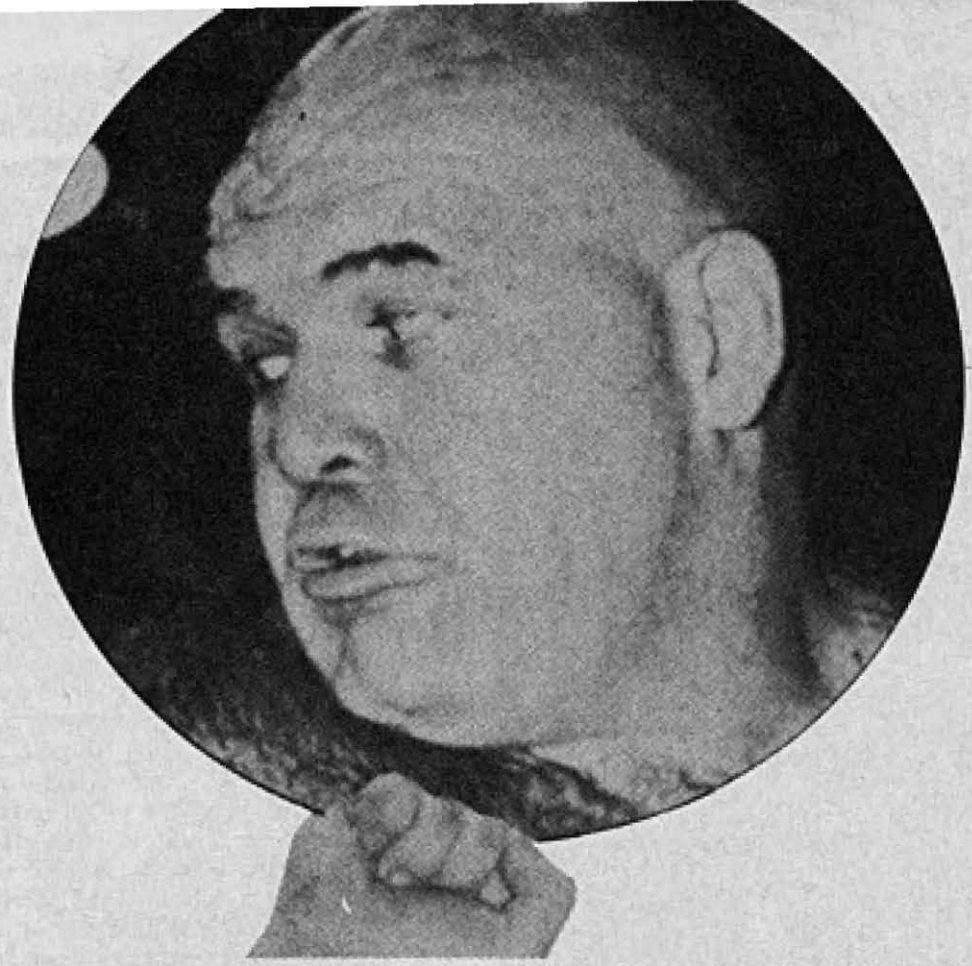
George considers Sammartino as the roughest wrestler he has ever faced in the ring. "When Bruno was the champion he fought to keep that belt like no other wrestler I've ever faced. He also has to be the strongest I've ever faced." Chief Jay Strongbow, Victor Rivera and Mario Milano are three others who have given George some stiff competition. "They gave me rough moments in the past. I'm still better than they are. In fact since my return to the WWWF area Victor Rivera was still here but finding out I was coming back he departed for parts unknown. Smart fella."

George came back to the WWWF area with a single purpose in mind. Winning the WWWF World Championship from Sammartino. "I was on a world tour when I heard that Sammartino lost the title to Ivan Koloff. I wasn't surprised. Just three days before that match I met Bruno in a match and I injured Sammartino with a chair in Pittsburgh. I did not realize that I had hurt Bruno bad at the time. Ivan Koloff got the credit for beating Sammartino but if it wasn't for me he never could have pulled it off. Even Sammartino admits this."

When George heard that Pedro Morales defeated Ivan Koloff for the title he set his sights on theLatin star. He finished all his signed commitments. "I had heard of Morales through the years but had never met him in a match. Then out of the blue he is the new cham-



The many faces of George "The Animal" Steele emphatically prove the rugged heavyweight is a super colorful performer wherever he apears.



When it comes to grimacing and grotesque facial expressions, George Steele has no peer.

pion. I said to myself I could beat this nothing."

George ran up a string of victories mainly with his Fling Hammerlock. Then he signed to meet Pedro Morales for the title in July in a Texas Death Style Match. George insisted upon this match. "Morales is a big nothing. He still is. In one match I was beating up on an opponent when in rushed Chief Strongbow to stop me. What a laugh. Well I gave him the Steele treatment. Then that Morales jumps in to help from behind my back and tried to hurt me. His plan was to get me hurt so I could not be in the best condition for our match. So I left the ring before anything could be done to me. Imagine sending in that renegade Indian to hurt me and when that did not work he came in to try and do his own dirty work. I out-foxed them both."

A week before the match between him and Pedro was to take place George also signed to meet Bruno. The match against Pedro took place as scheduled and a wild donnybrook had the fans on the edge of their seats. In the first few minutes George sent Pedro flying over the top ropes to the floor three times. George had the better part of the match in the early goings. When Pedro regained his senses, he dished out the same kind of action. When it was all over, Pedro was the winner but he came very close to losing his title.

Next came the match against Sammartino at the special show in Convention Hall in Philadelphia when Bruno was ex-champ. If he could defeat Bruno he could get another crack at Pedro for the title and meet Bruno again. George states, "Ever since Sammartino lost his title I had been trying to meet him in a match but without success. Bruno would not meet me. Then he signed an open contract. I signed that contract. He did not like the thought of meeting me when he did find out."

The card for Convention Hall pulled 11,210 fans to set a record for a Philadelphia card as the best attendance in 37 years. The match became a classic. More action took place outside the ring than in. Chairs, tables and the wooden stairs that the wrestlers use to enter and leave the ring were used, in this brawl. Even a foreign object which George was accused of bringing in the ring was used. Bruno took it away from George and used it on him, much to the delight of the fans. Bruno finally won with a flying Body Press.

The match did not end there. Steele claimed that his shoulders were not flush on the mat and ran out of the ring and grabbed the microphone and demanded five more minutes. Bruno was willing but his manager Arnold Skoaland was against it. He felt Bruno had won fair and square and had nothing to prove. Given the okay by the commission, Steele entered the ring and the match started again. Bruno was ready and used armlocks and flips that sent Steele flying. George had had enough and left the ring and headed straight for his dressing room shower to the boos of the crowd while in turn Sammartino was drenched with resounding cheers.

'ANIMAL' FEIGNS FEAR THEN CATCHES FOE OFF GUARD

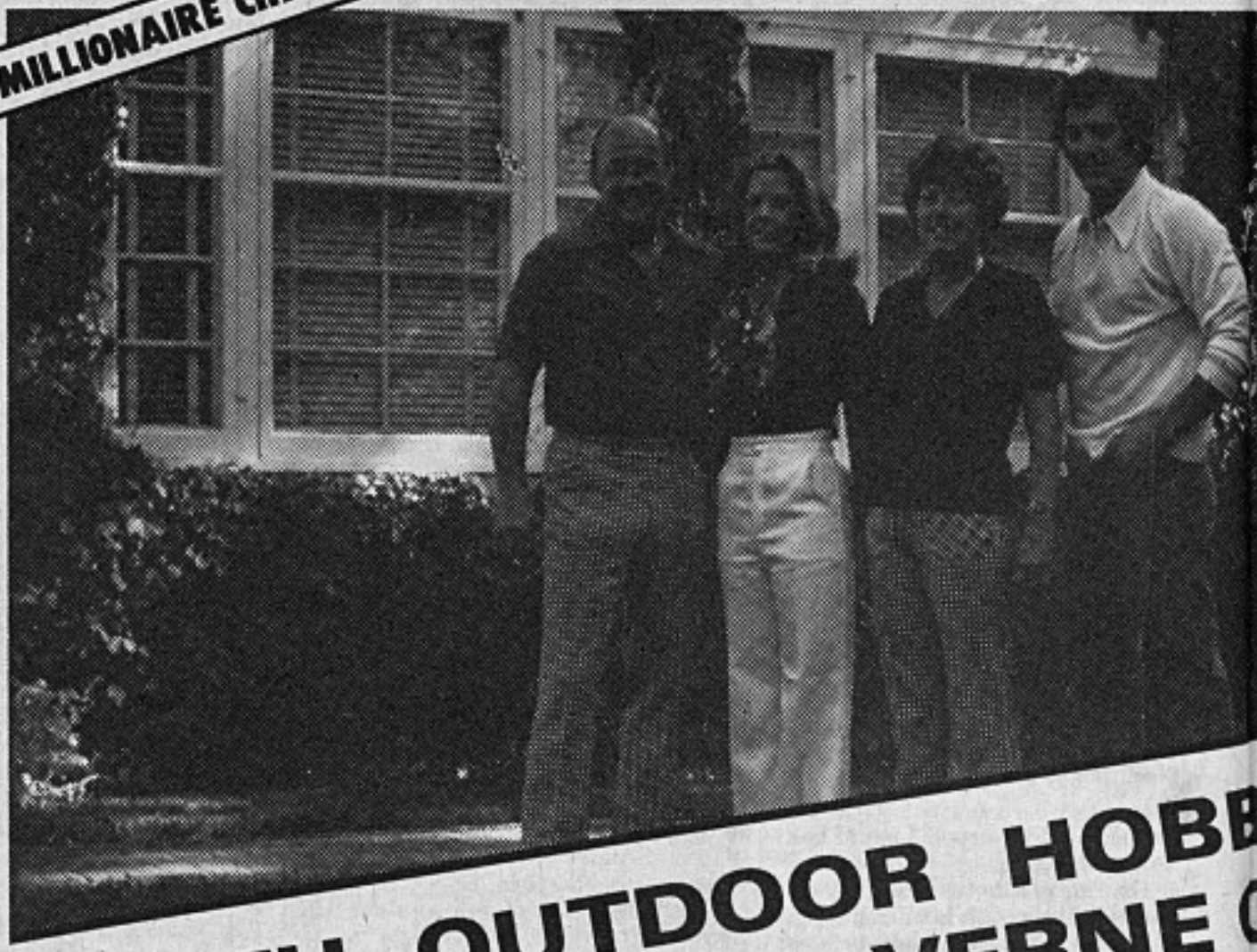
Before Steele could get another crack at Morales, he had lost his title to Stan Stasiak in a giant upset.

"I am still hoping at another shot at Morales and Sammartino but I'd rather have Bruno first and take his title away. I'm the better man and they both know it. . . otherwise why do you think they are avoiding me like the plague."

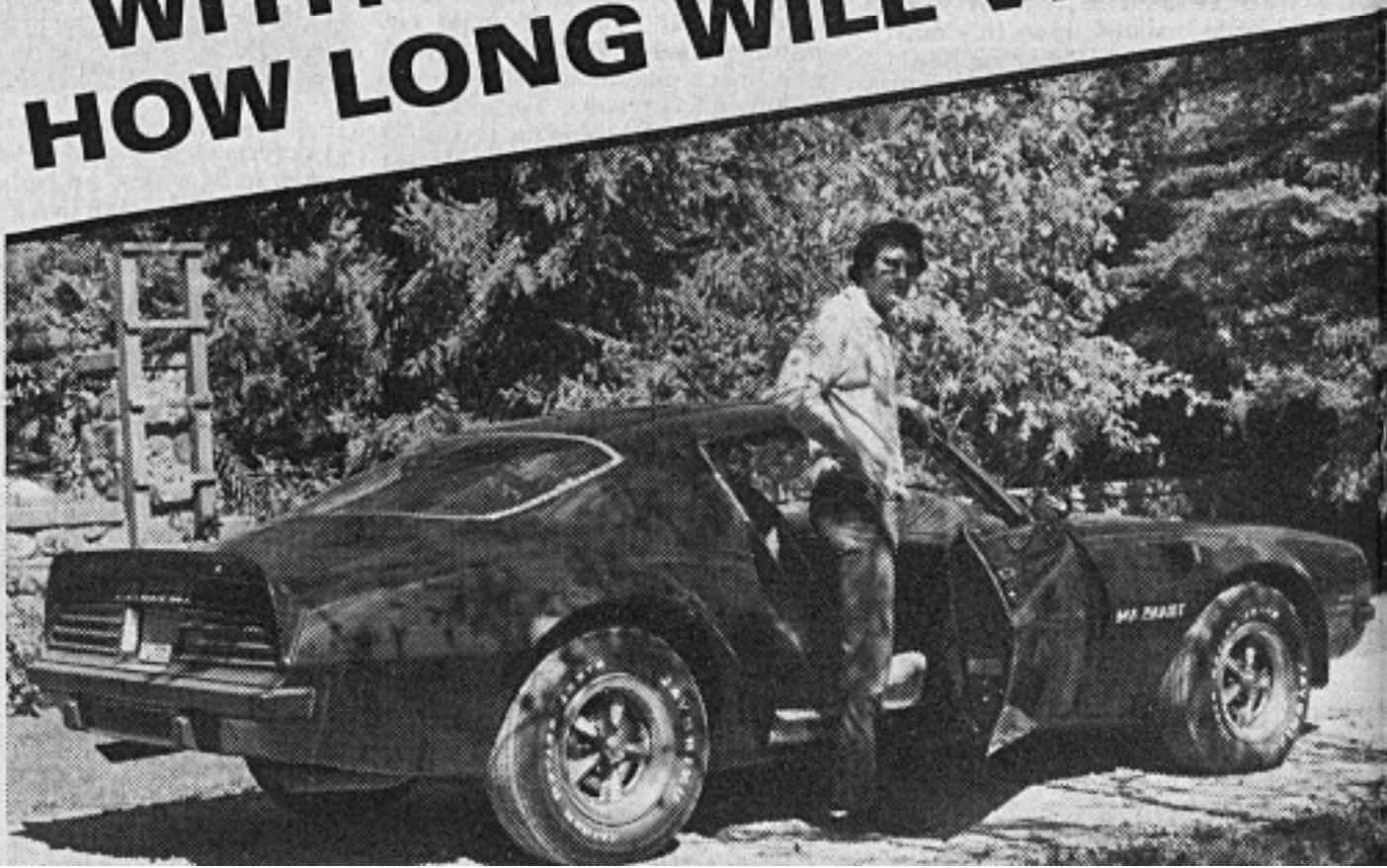
Meanwhile, should Steele continue to administer his wrestling brutality throughout the country, the day may not be far away when you will see George confined to cage matches.

After all, the wrestlers and fans alike look upon the hairy wild man as The Animal and what better environment for George Steele than meshed steel. . .

THE MILLIONAIRE CHAMPION



WITH OUTDOOR HOBB
HOW LONG WILL VERNE



OFFICIAL WRESTLING ANNUAL

BIES BECKONING, GAGNE CONTINUE?

After those long cold Minnesota winters, the famous Gagne family likes to get outdoors for a family portrait and looking left to right, you should recognize Verne, his wife, Mary, daughter Donna and son, Greg.

Verne became so engrossed in horseback riding that he went out and bought a few horses to brighten the landscape on his Minnesota estate.

When he is not busy on the pro mat circuit Greg Gagne has his favorite hobbies too — like driving his Trans Am Super Spot car.

When the American Wrestling Association's world champion finally retires, Gagne will be spending a lot of time in the north woods hunting his favorite game.

On a bright, sunny day early in 1946 Verne Gagne donned his traditional forest green uniform of the United States Marine Corps for the last time.

Turning to his comrades in arms, the good looking young man from Minnesota politely informed them:

SUPER MAT CHAMP STILL IN TOP FORM

"I don't know about you guys but I'm not so sure I want to play pro football when I finish at Minnesota. If I had my pick I'd rather be the world's heavyweight wrestling champion — no, make that will be the next champion."

Gagne has never been from the braggadocio school but he was simply letting the other leathernecks know how he felt about the future.

Verne returned to the University of Minnesota after a sensational grid career with the El Toro, Calif., Flying Marines, who lost the service national championship to the Fleet City Sailors

Verne Gagne and his family relax in their Minneapolis home and put the constant demands of professional wrestling out of their minds as daughter Donna plays the piano, much to the approval of dad and mother Mary and brother Greg who is also a mat professional.

FAMILY TIES FACTOR OVER RETIREMENT

As a top ranking wrestler since 1950, Gagne has acquired more trophies than a dozen athletes dream about.

in December, 1945 in the Los Angeles Coliseum.

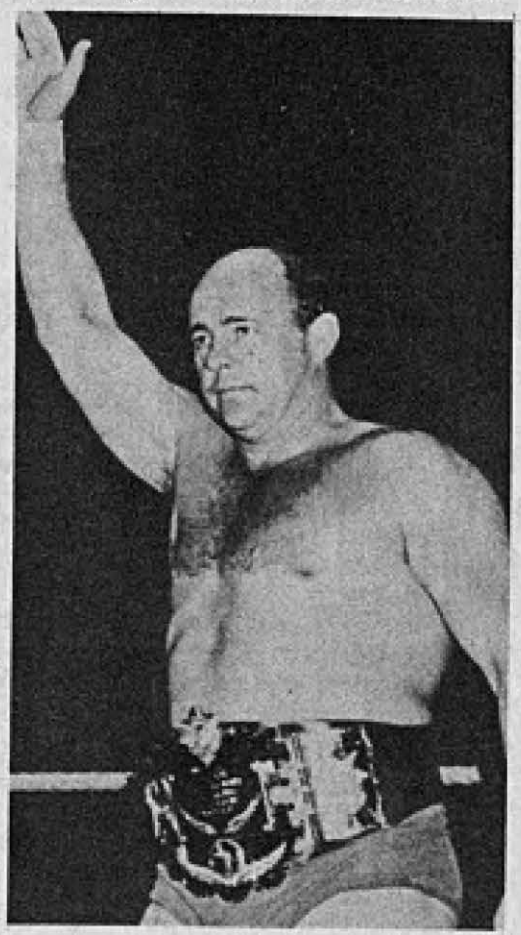
Gagne turned down a lucrative contract to play for the Chicago Rockets in the newly formed All-America Conference, preferring to play for the Gophers where he won All-America honors from 1947 through 1949.

And, of course, reigned as the NCAA and Big Ten wrestling champion. He also represented the United States in the 1948 Olympics in London.

When Gagne was serving with the Marines at El Toro he was only a couple of hitch-hikes away from Hollywood, then the world's greatest dream factory. Verne never thought about movies in those days but it was destined to become part of his colorful and high-successful career.

The superbly conditioned Gagne has dominated the American Wrestling Association as world's champion like no man before him. And with his outgoing, engaging personality, Verne was a natural to be approached about a film on the pro ranks called "The Wrestler."

Gagne wound up in the role of Mike Bullard, the A.W.A. champion in the film, plus producing the movie in conjunction with an associate. Billy Robinson, cast as Billy Taylor, the No. 1 challenger, was and is one of Verne's foremost challengers on and off the screen.



Ed Asner, well known for his work in the Mary Tyler Moore show and other featured roles, played the promoter. And the ranks were filled out by other top-flight wrestling names.

Many of the themes in the film are actual events in the wrestling world. For example, in the film, the champion of the AWA played by Gagne is considering a match between himself and the champions of the other divisions, Bruno Sammartino of the WWWF (World Wide Wrestling Federation) and Jack Brisco of the NWA (National Wrestling Alliance).

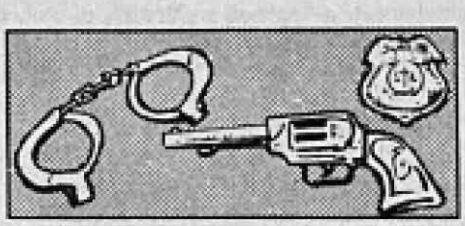
Such a confrontation among the best of the three has been on the minds of many, including wrestlers, promoters, presidents of the divisions, as well as the fans themselves. While the fever pitch is built up during the movie for such an event to occur, it never does. This is also the situation in real life for to date no group has made serious movement toward such a resolution.

Another consistency with reality is Gagne's school for wrestlers. In the movie he trains youthful athletes, aspiring to the ranks of professionalism. In fact, Gagne owns and operates the Minneapolis Boxing and Wrestling Club, Inc. Here potential professionals are trained by the men hand-picked by the best of the fighters, the champ himself.

While he was in England he made a final commitment that would set a new direction to his life — he would become a professional wrestler, an idea that had occurred to him several years previous while in service. His first match took place in May 1949 in Texas. In short order he attained the state championship.

Even as a newcomer Gagne was able to keep the fans pouring in to see him in action. There was a charismatic charm about the wrestler that kept the promoters' pocketbooks well-lined. It was an initial success that heralded a brilliant future for the young up-

The former University of Minnesota All-American stands supreme as the conquering hero while wearing the championship belt.



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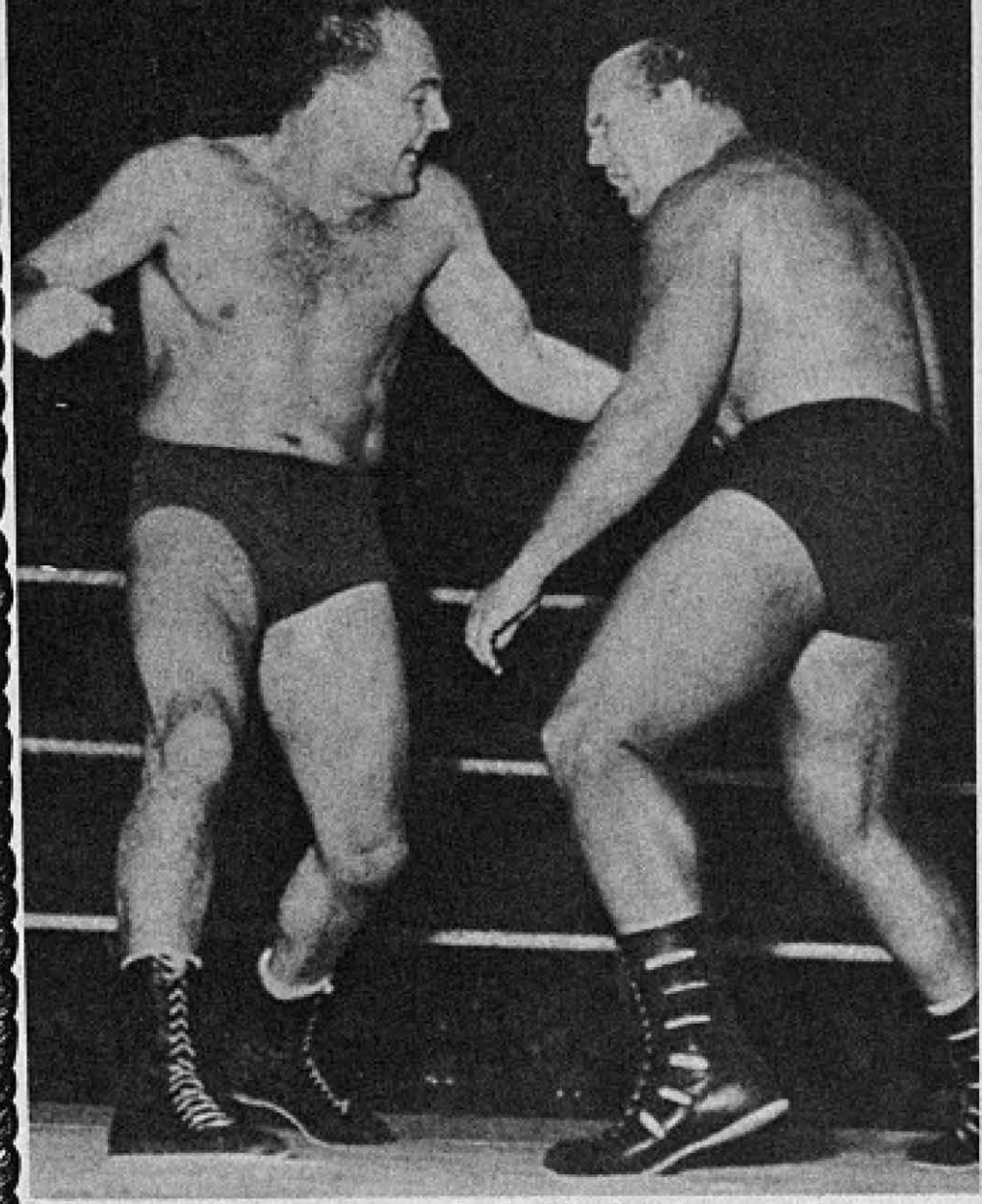

Verne Gagne was a logical choice for the title role in the movie 'The Wrestler'.

HAD STARRING ROLE IN FILM, "THE WRESTLER"

start who within a brief time was challenging the top men of the mat circuit. Lou Thesz, the then world champion, found himself fending off an opponent who was determined to knock him out of his front slot.

"I guess they met about six times with Thesz holding the majority of victories. However, Verne beat Lou at the Amphitheatre," explained Sam Muchnick, president of the NWA, and he was quick to add that it was one of the most memorable events he had ever witnessed.

That particular battle catapulted Gagne into the forefront of the wrestling world. From that moment on he was a force to be reckoned with.

The style of wrestling espoused by him was of the clean, scientific variety. It earned him an award that few other wrestlers have had the privilege to since attain—The Police Gazette belt in Chicago on Jan. 26, 1952 in light of his significant and unparalleled contribution to fair play in the ring.

"I don't mind if my opponents get extra rough and if he wants to

play dirty, that's alright with me — I know all that stuff too. But I'd rather go in there and wrestle. To hell with those street fighting tactics," Gagne explains.

It was this kind of attitude that brought down on his head all the honors the wrestling world could give. Community leaders were well aware of the need for a purging of the type of wrestling that had become popular at the time. Many of the foulest, most underhanded mat tacticians had made successful careers for themselves over the fallen bodies of more worthy opponents, men dedicated to keeping the wrestling rings free of such type of behavior as shown by their victors. It was in this regard, that civic leaders sought a national hero for their children, one that deserved the respect of the citizens of the community and could bring back to the sport some of the more wholesome qualities that it had been lacking.

Gagne has a ready wit and a phenomenal memory that allows him to recall with almost word by word description some of the events of his past. Recalling his grid days with the El Toro Marines, Vernes recounted.

"Sam Cordovano who was recruiting for the Buffalo Bills, entertained some of us one night in Los Angeles. Sam was trying to sign some of the marines. I really couldn't make up my mind.

"Finally, I said to Sam I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll Indian wrestle you. If you win, I sign. If I win, I go back to school. Cordovano was real strong.

"He played football at Georgetown and later wrestled pro. Any way, as you know, I went back to school."

Having learned the basic wrestling moves in college, Gagne is well-versed in the amateur style of wrestling as well as the professional style. He is a leading exponent of amateur wrestling and helped its cause on numerous occasions. He analyzes some of the inherent differences between the two wrestling styles — "The philosophy is different. As a pro you have to beat a man colorfully in order to draw crowds. Things like flying tackles, body slams and so on are executed to give the fans a thrill as well as effective holds on an opponent. In college you work for

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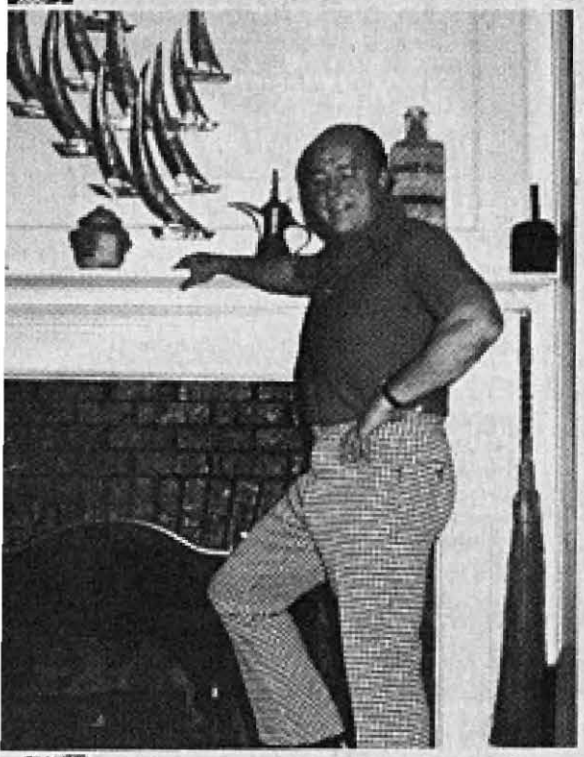


Verne is the man about the house as he relaxes with his dog in front of the fireplace of his ultra-modern home.

points. That way it isn't as wide open because you lose points if you permit an opponent to break a hold.

"The basic moves are similar. The main difference is the means you take to pin your opponent."

Whenever Sam Muchnick talks wrestling, people listen, so when the president of the rival NWA sounds off about a wrestler, the wrestling world pays especially close attention. Gagne receives honorable mention from him — "Gagne has never won our NWA sanction but I consider him one of the greatest wrestlers of modern times."

Verne Gagne is no ordinary wrestler and there are many in the wrestling community who will be more than willing to substantiate this claim. But words are no longer important to convince. The facts now can speak for themselves.

Now in his late forties, perhaps the day isn't far off when Gagne will abdicate his throne to spend more time with his family.

Yet Verne won't stray far from the sport that has made him a millionaire in more than two decades of world wide competition. Gagne's business acumen is second to none and his international contacts are endless.

Despite his globe-trotting, Verne likes to spend as much time as possible with his family. He and his charming wife, Mary, have three grown daughters and a son, Greg, who is now in his apprenticeship as a prowrestler.

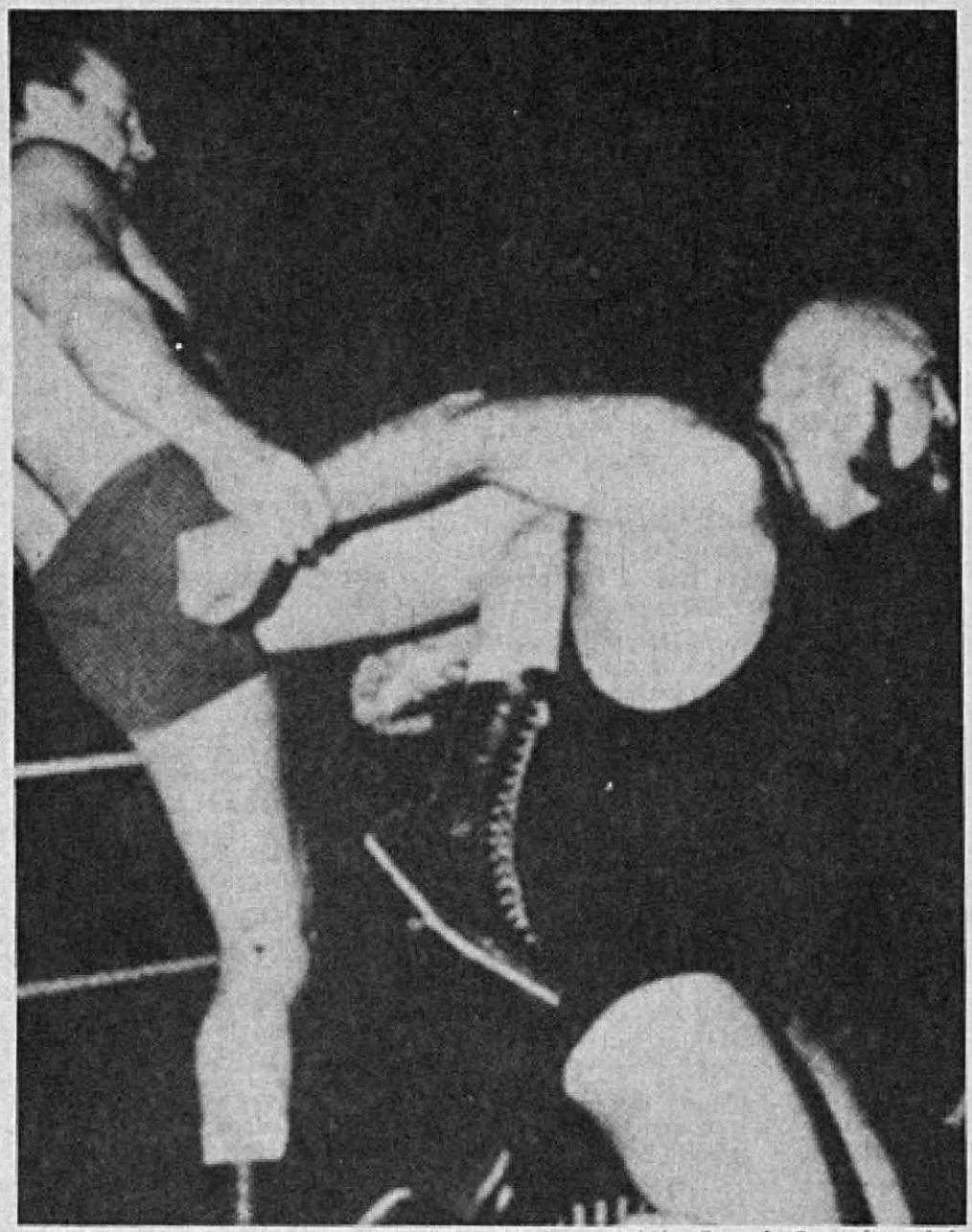
Verne is the all-around sportsman, enjoying hunting, fishing and horseback riding but until recent years when he has cut his ring apperances almost in half, Gagne hasn't had much time to follow his avocations.

"That's all going to change in the future I assure you," Verne smiled.

Gagne's son is making swift strides in a move to the top of the ratings and is currently 10th as a pretender to his father's throne.

Will they ever meet in competition?

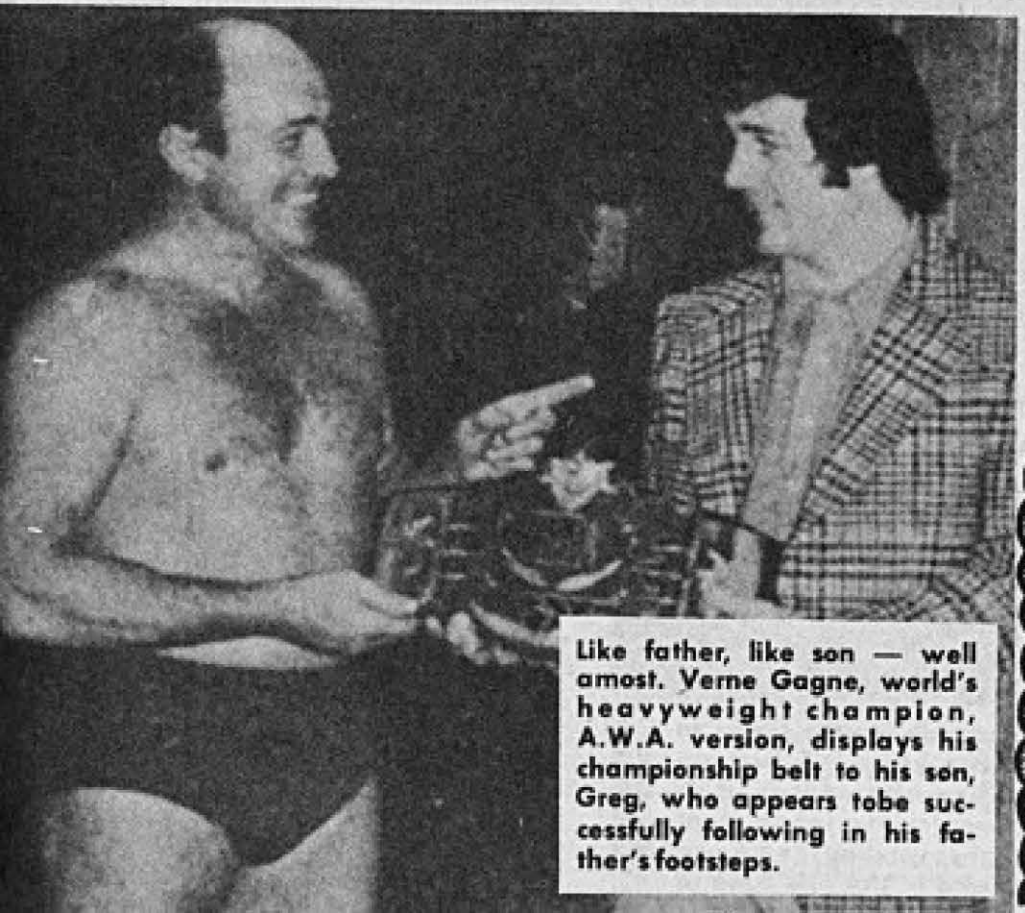
"That isn't likely but if he thinks he is going to inherit my championship, he'd have to beat me. I'm certainly not going to hand it to him. I've always believes titles should be won and lost in the ring."



Gagne put the pressure on Mad Dog Vachon and the French-Canadian did not recover as the A.W.A. champion won the match in straight falls.

Early in his career, Gagne meets the fabulous Argentine Rocca in a caged match in New York and ducks under as the Latin star seems to be playing leap frog.

GREG GAGNE IN BID TO SUCCEED FAMOUS FATHER



Like father, like son — well amost. Verne Gagne, world's heavyweight champion, A.W.A. version, displays his championship belt to his son, Greg, who appears tobe successfully following in his father's footsteps.

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The truth on Moondog Mayne

SHOULD HE BE OUTLAWED FROM WRESTLING?

by GEORGE ANDERSON

With his flowing white hair and beard, Moondog Mayne may look like Santa Claus but his appearance is a complete misnomer — there is absolutely nothing cheerful about his manner nor personality.

When he steps into a wrestling ring, the 281-pound terror produces one of the biggest earthquakes felt in San Francisco in years.

Though well schooled in the scientific side of his craft, Mayne prefers to taunt his opponents and fans as the biggest meanie to ever appear in California.

Moondog won the United States heavyweight title from Canadian-born Pat Patterson last year in the Cow Palace and he hasn't stopped baying over his achievement yet.

"Why should I be modest . . . a guy doesn't have to be when he is the best in his particular business. Every wrestler I have ever faced knows he has met his master. If he dosn't realize it at the start, then he certainly knows before the match is very far along."

Mayne's rugged attack is blended with stealth and cunning and for the ost part, referees have found it virtually impossible to catch him the act.

And as the rule book states, if they don't catch him, there is no way they can disqualify him.

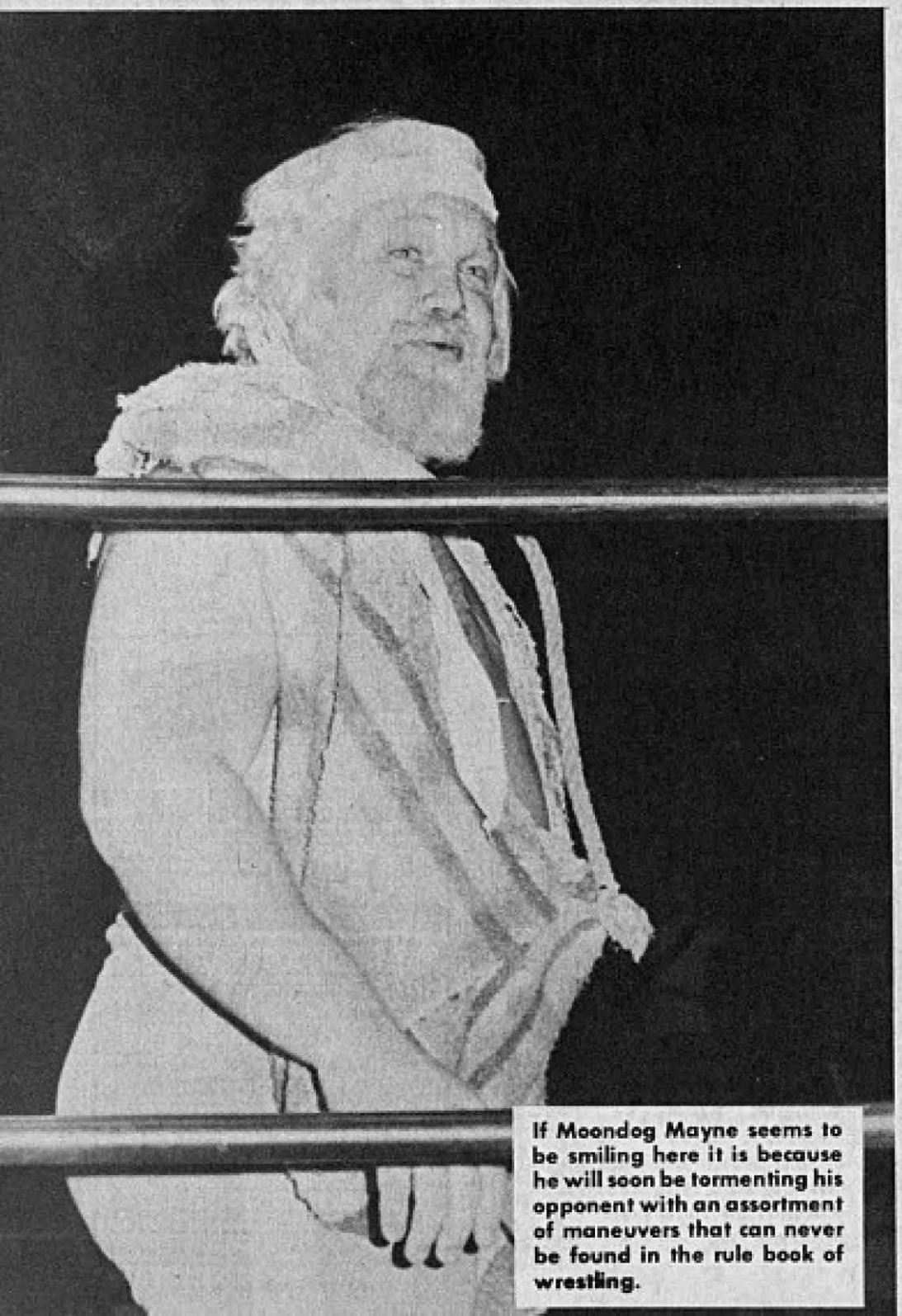
In his own brand of self-appraisal, Moondog recently told the media:

"If you really want to know the truth. I really couldn't care less what anyone thinks of me. I know I am the greatest wrestler who ever lived. And just for spite I am going to live to be a hundred. And by then I will have won every major championship in the history of professional wrestling and everyone will respect me."

Moondog openly admits he hates the fans — not only in California but everywhere he displayed his ruthless tactics.

"They are jealous because I won the title from a bum like Patterson. They liked Patterson so when I proved to them that I am the greatest ever they started booing and yelling at me."

Mayne is correct when he says California promoters want him on their cards because he draws large crowds but he isn't very charitable in adding "they know I draw these stupid pigs into the arenas."



If Moondog Mayne seems to be smiling here it is because he will soon be tormenting his opponent with an assortment of maneuvers that can never be found in the rule book of wrestling.

One of Moondog's chief rivals is Peter Maivia of Samoa and every one of their encounters has been the perfect example of the hero versus the villain. And you can just guess who the heroi s, can't you?

Maivia, who was officially declared a Chief of Samoa last year, doesn't hesitate to remind he defeated Mayne as the last two wrestlers standing in a $12,000 Battle Royal in the Cow Palace.

Moondog doesn't acknowledge such a loss as "regulation" but he is rather elusive about facing Maivia in a solo match with his title on the line.

Promoter Roy Shire, one of the all-time greats, has given Northern California super shows year after year and on his 1975 plans there is no way he can ignore matching Mayne against such challengers as Patterson or Maivia.

TRIES TO MAIM FOES, NOT JUST DEFEAT THEM

Perhaps Shire would consider bringing in The Sheik or Dick The Bruiser to give Moondog his comeuppance. If these super villains can't put Mayne in his place then you have to wonder who can.

Gorilla Monson and The Black Gordman are two other rough challengers clamoring for a shot at Moondog.

When queried by this observer on why he constantly does everything in the ring that is flagrantly illegal, Moondog explained:

"Of course, I break the rules and why shouldn't I?" Mayne snarled recently. "I am the United States Heavyweight Wrestling Champion, the king of all I survey, and being the number one wrestler in the sport certainly gives me the right to do what I want!

"I can say what I want when I want and the referees can't do a damned thing about it. They have to see me breaking the rules in order for them to make any move, such as disqualify me, and they never catch me. It's that simple.

Some of the referees get discouraged and I can see why. After all, if I were a referee trying to do my job, and I couldn't catch the

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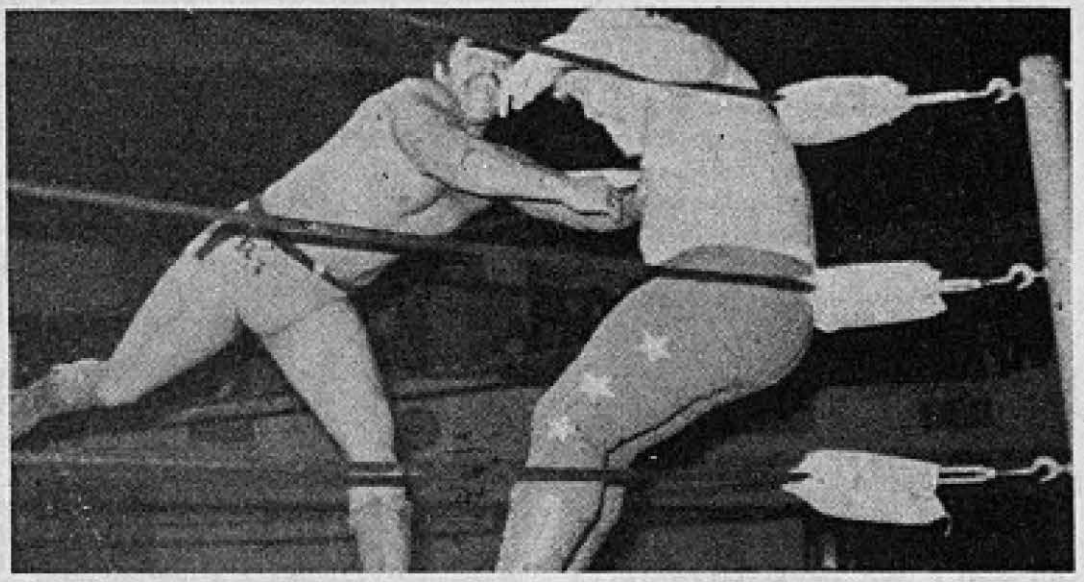


Rocky "Soulman" Johnson is one of the California-based wrestlers who always give Moondog plenty of trouble. Rocky is preparing to fling Mayne into the turnbuckle across the ring and obviously Moondog appears the reluctant dragon.

wrestler cheating when I was pretty sure that he was cheating, I sure would be upset, too."

What baffles so many who closely follow the sport is that Mayne could obviously achieve successful results were he to follow the rules. After all, Mayne is big and strong and he's fast and knows how to protect himself. It seems he simply gets a sadistic thrill out of injuring as many opponents as he can and if Mayne has his say about it, he'll continue to injure as many fellow matmen as at all possible regardless of who they are.

"You're damned right I'm going to hurt as many wrestlers as I can," Mayne shouted. "If I can, why not? I can't help it if I'm much stronger, smarter, faster and better than all other wrestlers, can I? Every man has a goal and I sure have mine already planned out. Before I ever dream of quitting wrestling, I am going to injure at least 25 more wrestlers. And, when I say injure, I don't mean just lay them off for a day or two. I mean I'm going to put each of them in the hospital and they're going to be hurt badly for a month or two, like maybe a few broken bones or something like that. After all, I mean strictly business.

"If you think Moondog Mayne seems mean and ruthless, then you're right." That's just what I am, mean and ruthless. That's the only way to be nowadays in wrestling. If I don't start breaking the rules right off the bat and therefore get the opening edge over my opponent, then I'm never going to be

TOPS PATTERSON THAN CALLS HIM "A BIG BUM"

able to win my matches and I know that if I don't break the rules first, then he sure will. I'm prepared."

When Mayne feels that his opponent is defeated enough to set him up for the "final kill," Mayne body slams his foe and then climbs to the top rope strand and leaps off, landing on his elbow with all his 281 pounds on his opponent's throat. He calls this the "Arkansas Stomp" and it hasn't let him down yet.

"I was the one who invented and perfected my hold and no one can copy it," the Moondog announced. "I've noticed other wrestlers of much lesser ability have attempted to copy the hold but they know damned well that they can't. No one can properly apply the hold like I can. There is only one Moondog Mayne. Once I apply that hold, that's it, my opponent is done for the night, or hopefully for the month. My 'Arkansas Stomp' hold is the greatest in wrestling, just like I'm the greatest wrestler there is."

Mayne prefers wrestling in single matches rather than tag bouts but he will tag up for a night if the promoter wants him to.

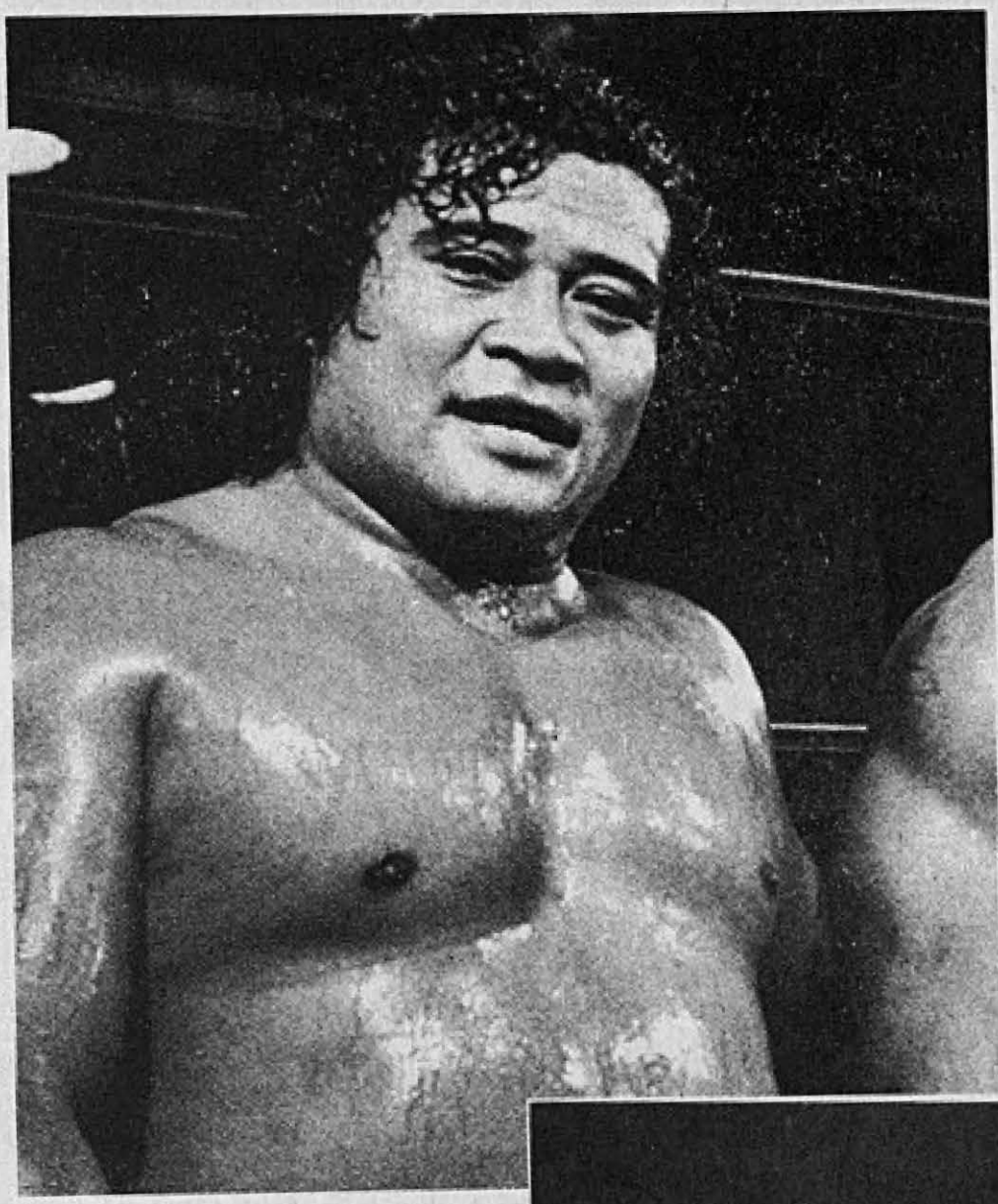
"Because there aren't any wrestlers of equal quality to me, I'm the one who winds up the low man on the totem pole in a tag bout. If my

team wins then I'm the one who always wins it for us and I have to share the glory with my partner. On the other hand, if my partner loses the match, then I have to suffer for something that I didn't do. If I have to wrestle in a tag bout," Mayne continued, "then I will. But, I prefer wrestling in single bouts. In my opinion, it's the only way to wrestle. Believe me."

Many fans who have closely watched Mayne in action over the last several months actually feel the man is crazy, that he needs some help because of things he has done.

For example, Mayne has done things on the weekly color television matches that few people believe. On one occasion, he was upset about an upcoming match and during his interview, he grabbed some glass and actually ripped it across his chest, bringing forth some blood, and he then began chewing some glass and thus cut his mouth.

On another occasion he ate a live goldfish that he brought out during his interview and several times he has knocked over the timekeeper's table in disgust and has threatened the television announcer many times as well.

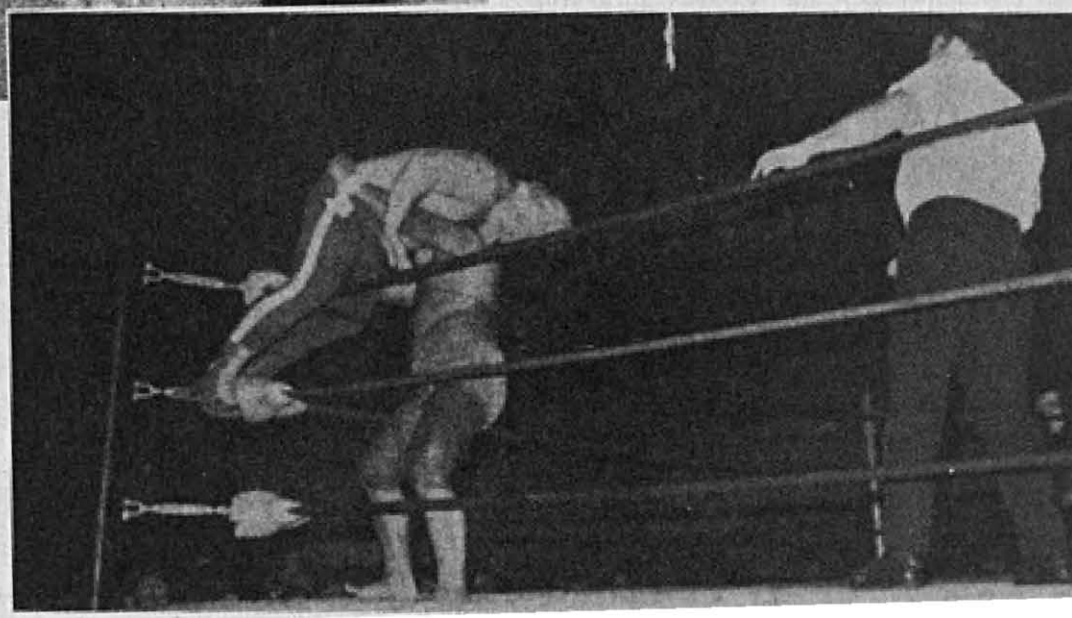


NOW U. S. HEAVY CHAMP, SUPER DRAW ON COAST

What are Mayne's plans for the future? Does he wish to retire with the championship or is he really going to injure as many opponents as he can?

"Of course I'm going to injure as many opponents as I can," Mayne was quick to respond. "That's what I said, isn't it? One of the wrestlers I am currently after right now is that no good Pat Patterson. He actually thinks he can defeat me and that makes me laugh. Nobody can defeat the great Moondog."

There is no question regarding the super, self-fed ego of this mountain who walks like a man but if Moondog Mayne can actually live up to all his boastful pronouncements, California wrestling devotees are going to see some fantastic performances for the remainder of 1975.



Peter Maivia, who is a genuine chief in his native Samoa, defeated Moondog as the last two men in a 13-man Battle Royal last year at the Cow Palace. Now he wants a shot at Mayne's United States heavyweight championship and the fans are backing up his demands.

One of Mayne's favorite tactics is to climb to the top rope and jump down on his opponent but unfortunately, Peter Maivia is wise to this maneuver and quickly pulls Moondog back into the ring.

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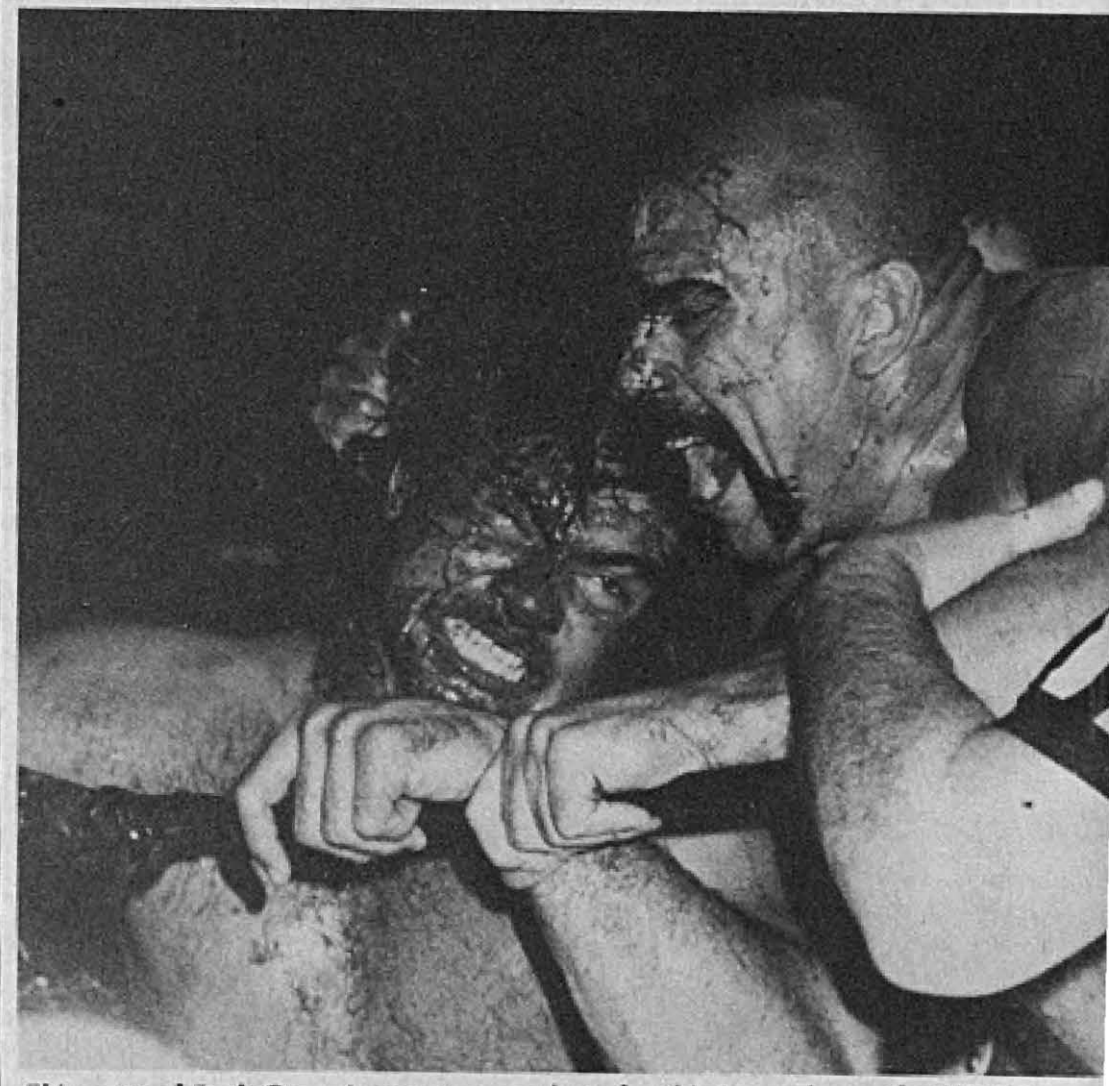


This copy of Ruth Oman's great cover photo for this issue shows the MONGOLIAN STOMPER cannibalistically chewing on Muraco's forehead!

WHEN DON MURACO GOT A PIECE OF HIDE FROM "MONGOLIAN" STOMPER FOR HIS TROPHY ROOM

SURFING, PRETTY GIRLS AND FUN ARE WHAT DON EXPECTED, NOT THE SAVAGE BRUTALITY HE GOT FROM THE MONGOLIAN STOMPER!

Most people visit sunny Florida in the winter to enjoy that coastal state's surfing, swimming and the legendary sight of Miami's pretty girls. But grappler Don Muraco's current visit to the Gulf Coast almost cost him his eyesight!

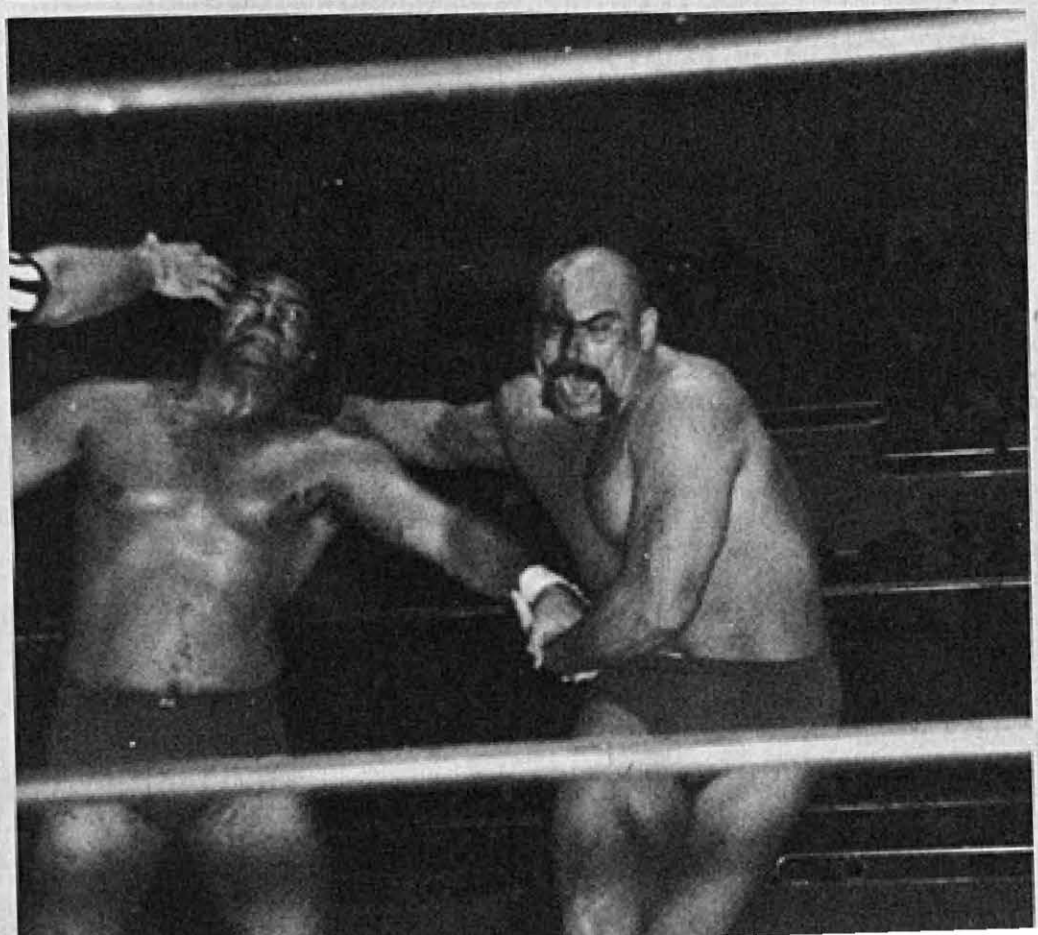
Handsome Don, one of today's most popular wrestlers, was fulfilling a committment to display his ring talents in Miami, Tampa and other major arenas. Unfortunately, when a crowd-pleasing star appears in this area he finds himself almost immediately confronted by "General" Gary Hart and the stable of mat villains this crafty ring manager has gathered over the past few months.

An attack by Gary's newest protege, the MONGOLIAN STOMPER, almost wound up with Muraco's eyes poked out of their sockets — and his blood being spilled in quantities sufficient to turn the entire ocean red!

All this came about because of Gary Hart's vendetta campaign against wrestling's "American Dream," highly popular Dusty Rhodes. Hart, in his quest to destroy Rhodes as a Florida favorite, imported top "bad guys" from all over the world. Bobby Duncum, Professor Toru Tanaka, The Psycho, Pak Song, Dick Slater and "The Korean Assassin" (who turned out to be none other than Strong Kobayashi when he was unmasked on television) have joined Hart's army in the war against Rhodes.

In turn, Dusty has been aided and supported by Don Muraco, Frank Hester, Johnny Gray and others in his many matches with these villains.

Newest member of the "Hart Horde" is the huge and balding MONGOLIAN STOMPER. Felt by many to be one of the ring's most brutal performers, the Stomper's favorite weapon is a kick to the head from his huge boots. The Mongolian isn't called the "Stom-



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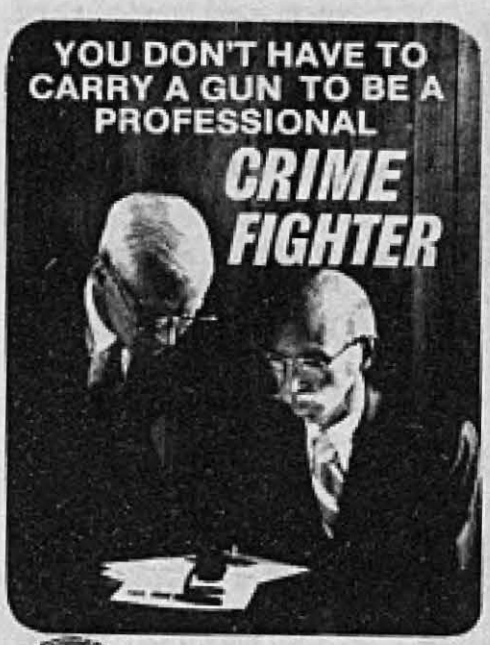

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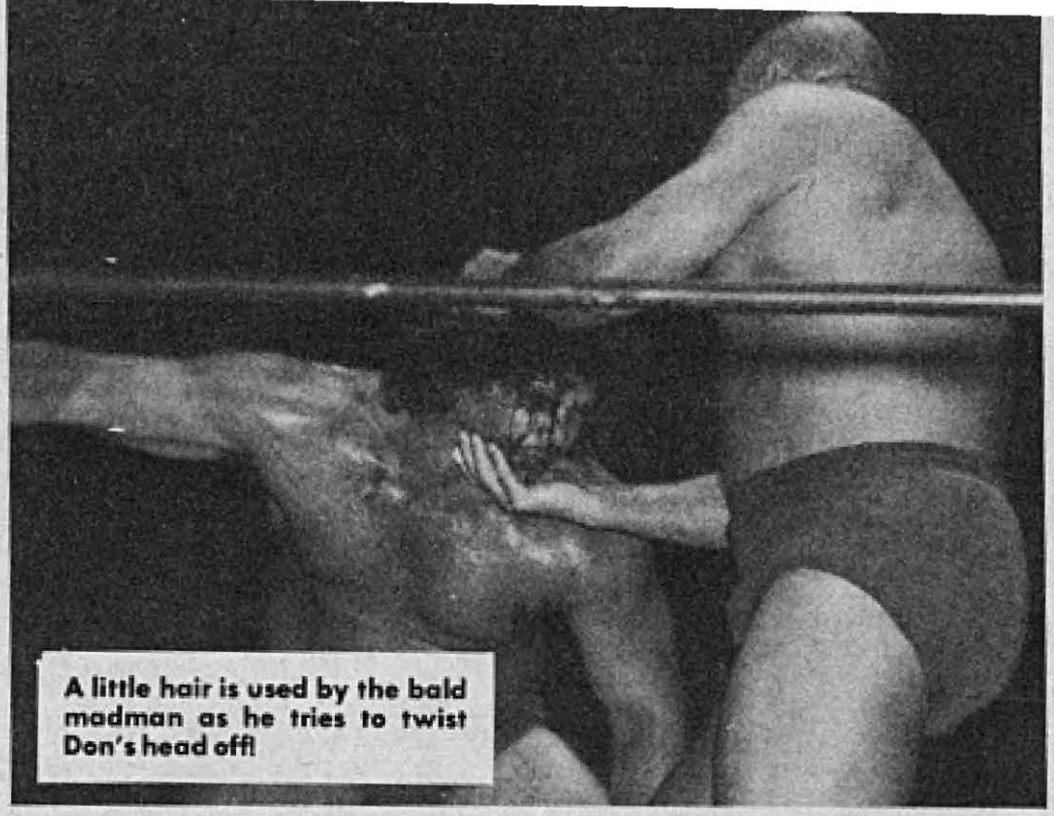


A little hair is used by the bald madman as he tries to twist Don's head off!

per" without just cause — and this form of dastardly attack usually spells disaster for his opponents!

One night last winter, Don Muraco was booked to meet manager-turned-wrestler Gary Hart in a special challenge event. Apparently, the General had deployed his troops properly since, before the opening bell could be rung, Stomper jumped into the ring and attacked Muraco from behind!

$500 FINE FOR ILLEGAL INTERFERENCE

Quickly, the Mad Mongolian used his sneak advantage and heavy boots to knock Muraco out, keeping Don from getting his chance to fight Hart.

The Stomper was fined $500 for his illegal interference by the Wrestling Commission. But this hardly bothered the foreigner since Commander Hart paid

After recovering from Stomper's "Pearl Harbor" attack, Muraco wanted more than money. He wanted a piece of hide from the vicious Mongolian Stomper for his trophy room!

Miami Beach was selected as the site for this match, with Stomper meeting Muraco head on instead of through a behind-the-back sneak attack.

Stomper drew blood early in the match by biting Don's forehead — even trying to poke Muraco's eyes out! The enraged and acrobatic young star came back strong enough, however, to split open the Stomper's own forehead and nose.

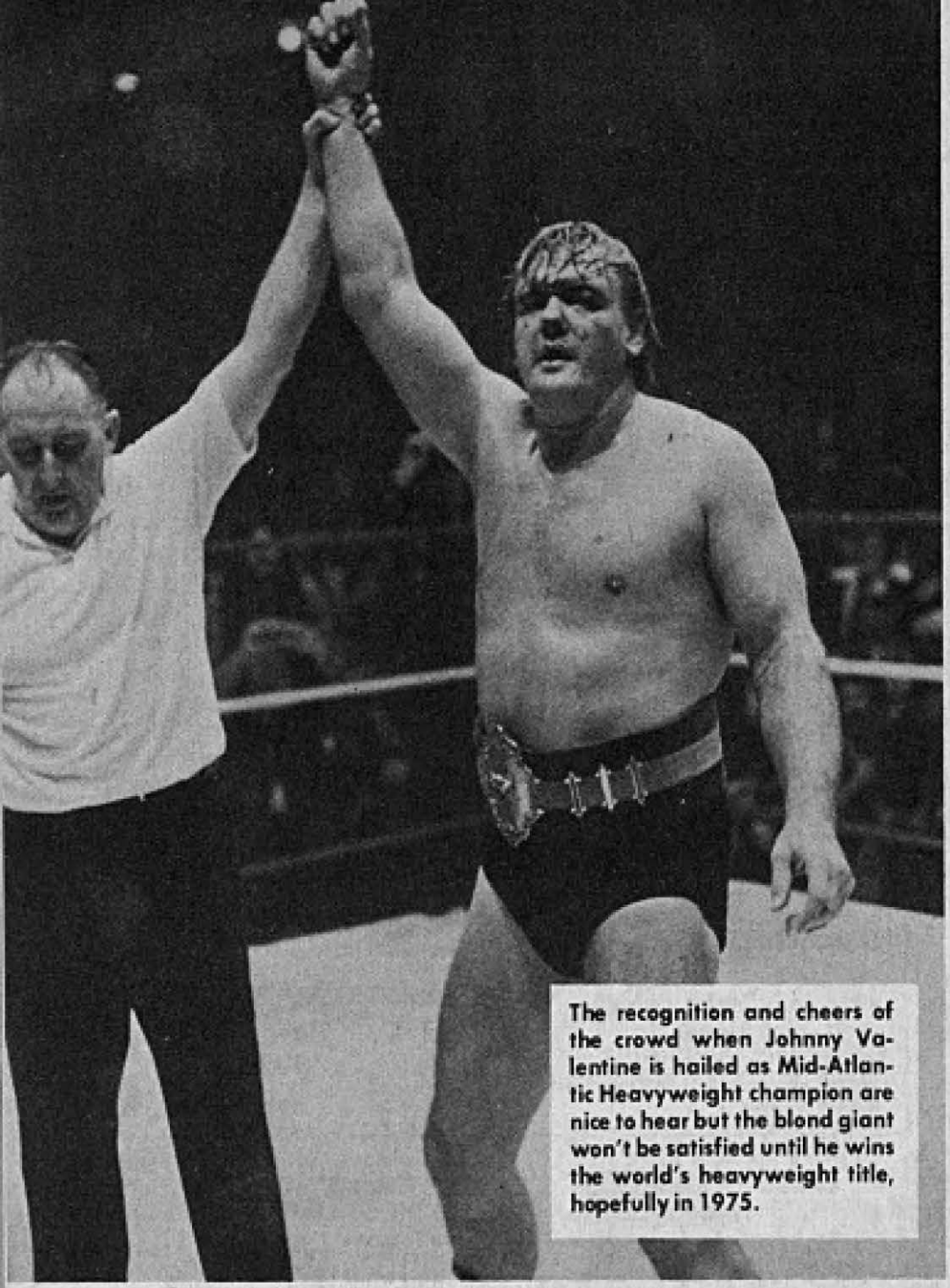
The white ring floor began to turn crimson — and when the bald villain discovered that some of the spilled blood was his own — he went totally berserk!

The smaller Muraco was not able to withstand the brutality of the Stomper and was finally pinned. But the enraged Mongolian wasn't satisfied with the sound of the winning bell. He began kicking Muraco's severely bleeding head with his weighted boots while the ref tried in vain to pull him away.

The referee finally signaled for help in pulling the Mongolian away — and disqualified Stomper in a reversal of the original decision.

Another automatic fine was issued for this fighting after the bell — with Gary Hart happily stepping in to pay the extra fee on behalf of his new battler.

Gary claims he's a millionaire. But if the Mongolian Stomper doesn't stop stomping opponents after a final pin, the fines may make Hart penniless before he can fully prepare his new monster to meet Gary's Number One Enemy, Dusty Rhodes!



The recognition and cheers of the crowd when Johnny Valentine is hailed as Mid-Atlantic Heavyweight champion are nice to hear but the blond giant won't be satisfied until he wins the world's heavyweight title, hopefully in 1975.

For many ardent devotees of professional wrestling it may seem that Johnny Valentine has been performing throughout the world since the Year One.

Though such statement is bending the fact out of all proportions it is a matter of record that the powerful and popular heavyweight is now in his third decade among the game's super stars.

Valentine had exploded on the scene shortly before the Korean War erupted to give rise to the belief that World War III was a frightening possibility.

Johnny's exciting mat career has taken him to the depth and breadth of North America plus more foreign ports than the blond behemoth has fingers and toes.

Valentine had touched on all bases as a super box office attraction... hero... villain... champion-

JOHNNY VA

WON'T RETIRE UNTIL HE'S

ship contender and perhaps a man who has the frustrating honor of being in the right place at the wrong time.

Johnny has defeated five world's champions but this significant achievement came either before or after his victim held the prized diadem.

One confidante close to the native of Seattle, Wash., has warned the legions of Valentine fans that he could possibly retire if he isn't successful in winning the title sometime during 1975.

Such rumors are a natural to stir controversy but it is highly questionable if Valentine is ready to call it a career since he is still much in demand and has the skill, strength and overall ability to defeat most of the ranking performers in the game today.

Furthermore, this 242-pound athlete has never been cited for folding his tent and slithering away when the pressure is the greatest.

"Yes, I have mentioned a couple of times about retiring. I don't need the money and there have been several attractive business opportunity presented to me. However, I know I would miss wrestling because it has been my life and very good to me. Besides, I'm still determind to win a world's championship and I don't want to retire until I do," Valentine explained recently.

Personally, this observer believes Valentine will continue doing what he has been doing for last 20 years or more—knocking off the pretenders to the throne and new talent emerging every year hopeful of making a name for themselves in the big time.

Certainly the promoters in the major mat centers would make it more than worth Valentine's while to scrub all that idle talk about hanging up his togs.

Here is just a sample of how the wrestling impresarios feel about the blond giant.

Valentine can be just as rough and mean as his opponent likes and if such super villains as The Sheik try any funny stuff, it is not uncommon to find Johnny and his rival bleeding with the latter usually getting the worst of it.

WILL VETERAN SUPERSTAR QUIT AT PEAK?

Sam Muchnick of St. Louis: "Valentine's such an outstanding attraction that hisschedule hasoften been just as gruelling as that of the world champion Jack Brisco. And Valentine's record—it's simply sensational."

John Ringley of Charlotte, N.C.: "Valentine has never looked better than he does today. It is amazing how much punishment this man can absorb and be able to retaliate effectively."

Paul Boesch of Houston: "Valentine is versatile. John can adapt sccessfully to any situation and any opponent."

Valentine, who is a former Missouri state champion, did get a shot at Brisco's title last fall in St. Louis by slipping past former champ Harley Race, Don Fargo and George Steele.

In one of the toughest matches seen in Kiel Auditorium in years as Brisco relied on his figure four leg lock and suplex to match Valentine's array which included a "brain buster", a punishing elbow smash delivered to any section of the anatomy, plus the sleeper hold, the back breaker and the abdominal stretch.

It went the full limit of two out of three falls with Brisco retaining his corwn by the closest of margins.

Johnny didn't offer any alibis but he is determined to get another shot at Brisco in the near future.

Recalling the high points of his career against former champions, Valentine has met and defeated Pat O'Connor, Buddy Rogers, Lou Thesz, Gene Kiniski and of course, Race.

Valentine is an athlete of style, strength and supreme confidence

LENTINE

WORLD CHAMP

in his ability to put his opponent out of action.

Since winning the Mid-Atlantic heavyweight championship from Jerry Brisco early in 1974, Johnny has guaranteed $1,000 of his own money to any opponent who can beat him in 10 minutes.

Draws or disqualifications don't count at Valentine's payoff window and to date he hasn't been forced to come up with the cash.

Irony or not, Valentine is particularly mean if he draws a match on Feb. 14 and it doesn't matter where the locale might be or who the opponent is.

"When I started out some 20 years ago, a lot of wrestlers and fans kidded me about my name but that is all in the past."

"I think I have been around long enough now that they know I'm not gonna play games when a match starts," Johnny smiled.

In many respects, Johnny's charisma is unique—he is one of the few name grapplers who can be booed and cheered in the same

MISSED IN BID LAST FALL FOR BRISCO'S TITLE

match.

Valentine makes no excuses for his performances.

"Yes, I like to wrestle rough but I don't think of myself as a dirty wrestler. I'll never be a gentleman in the ring but I try to be one outside and that's really where it counts."

Johnny was a big hit in Texas in the early seventies but this type of box office appeal has followed Valentine wherever he wrestles.

When the name of Johnny Valentine appears on a card, sellout crowds aren't the exception, they are the rule.

Valentine is currently ranked seventh by the National Wrestling Federation for Antonio Inoki's crown but the Blond Bomber also has made successful forays into the territories of the National Wrestling Alliance American Wrestling Association and the World Wide Wrestling Federation where Jack Brisco, Verne Gagne and Bruno Sammartino are the respective kingpins.

Like all professionals, Valentine nurtures winning the world's heavyweight championship before he calls it a career.

"I don't care who holds the title—Brisco, Gagne or Sammartino. If they will give me a shot, I"ll prove I can beat them. I've beaten practically every champ but it was either before or after they held the title. Lou Thesz, Buddy Rogers, Gene Kiniski, Pat O'Connor... all of them... unfortunately they didn't own the crown

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then," Johnny moans.

Valentine is tired of being a man who has beaten the right opponent at the wrong time.

Johnny is particularly proud of winning two championships while campaigning in Texas—the state's heavyweight title and the brass knuckles trophy.

"It was the first time any man had held the two titles at the same time. I beat Killer Kowalski for the brass knuckles award with the stipulation the loser would leave the state. I don't think Kowalski has been back since."

The powerhouse heavyweight contends "it is tougher to hold those two championships than it is the American heavyweight title because they involve two different styles of wrestling."

Fans in Cleveland are still talking about Valentine's appearance in 1972 at Cleveland's spacious Municipal Stadium, home of the baseball Indians in the American League East.

Bob Finnegan put the card together and it was an all-star card to end all star programs. Valentine was in the featured match against Johnny Powers for the North American championship.

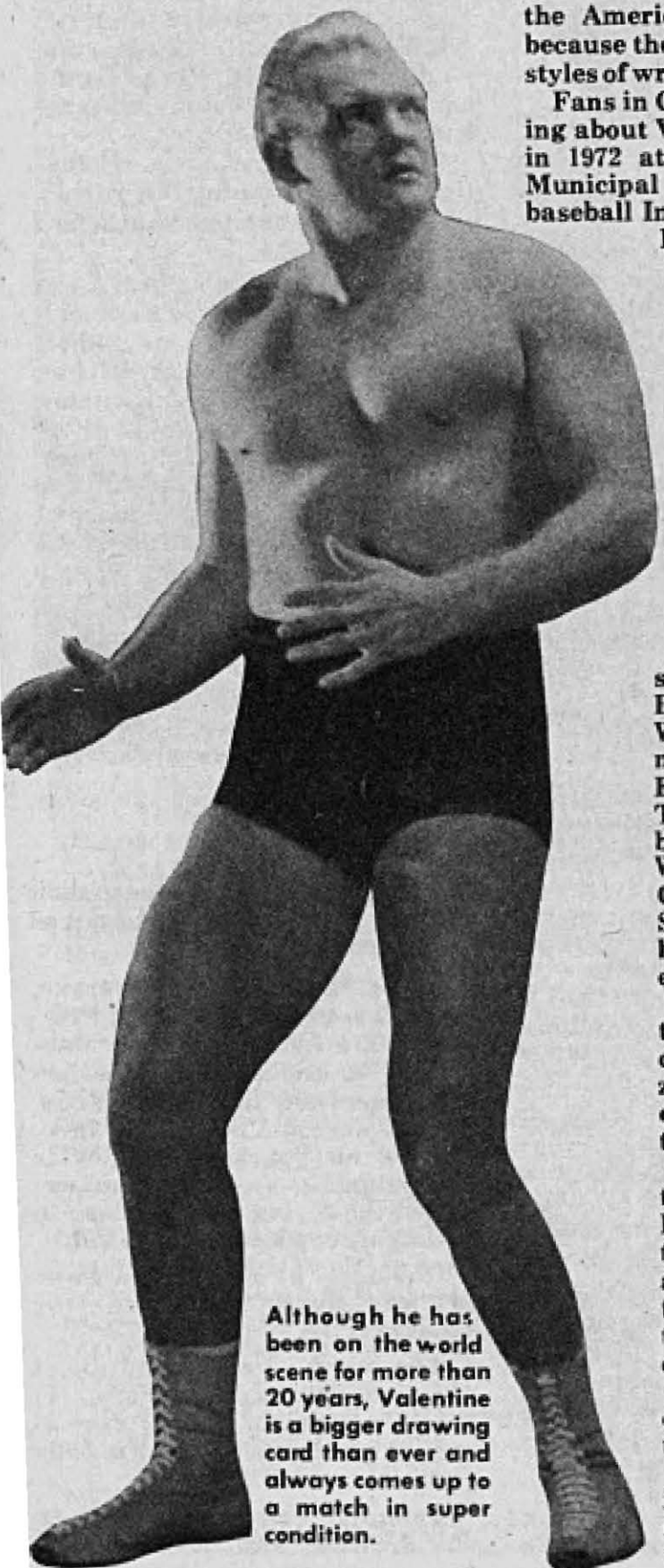
However, before the two stars of stars collided, 15,000 fans saw such names as Bobo Brazil, Killer Brooks, Wahoo McDaniel, Johnny and Donny Fargo, Ernie Ladd, Abdullah The Butcher, The Fabulous Moolah, Vicki Williams, Donna Christinello, Toni Rose, Sandy Parker, and Debbie Johnson among others.

The four-hour wrestling extravaganza came to a wild and frenzied climax when Powers and Valentine entered the ring.

It was a rematch in the Ohio city since Valentine, the villain through and through, attacked Powers before the bell rang and broke the North American champion's nose.

Powers never recovered and Johnny posted the victory.

In pre-match publicity, Valentine boasted he would break his adversary's nose once



Although he has been on the world scene for more than 20 years, Valentine is a bigger drawing card than ever and always comes up to a match in super condition.

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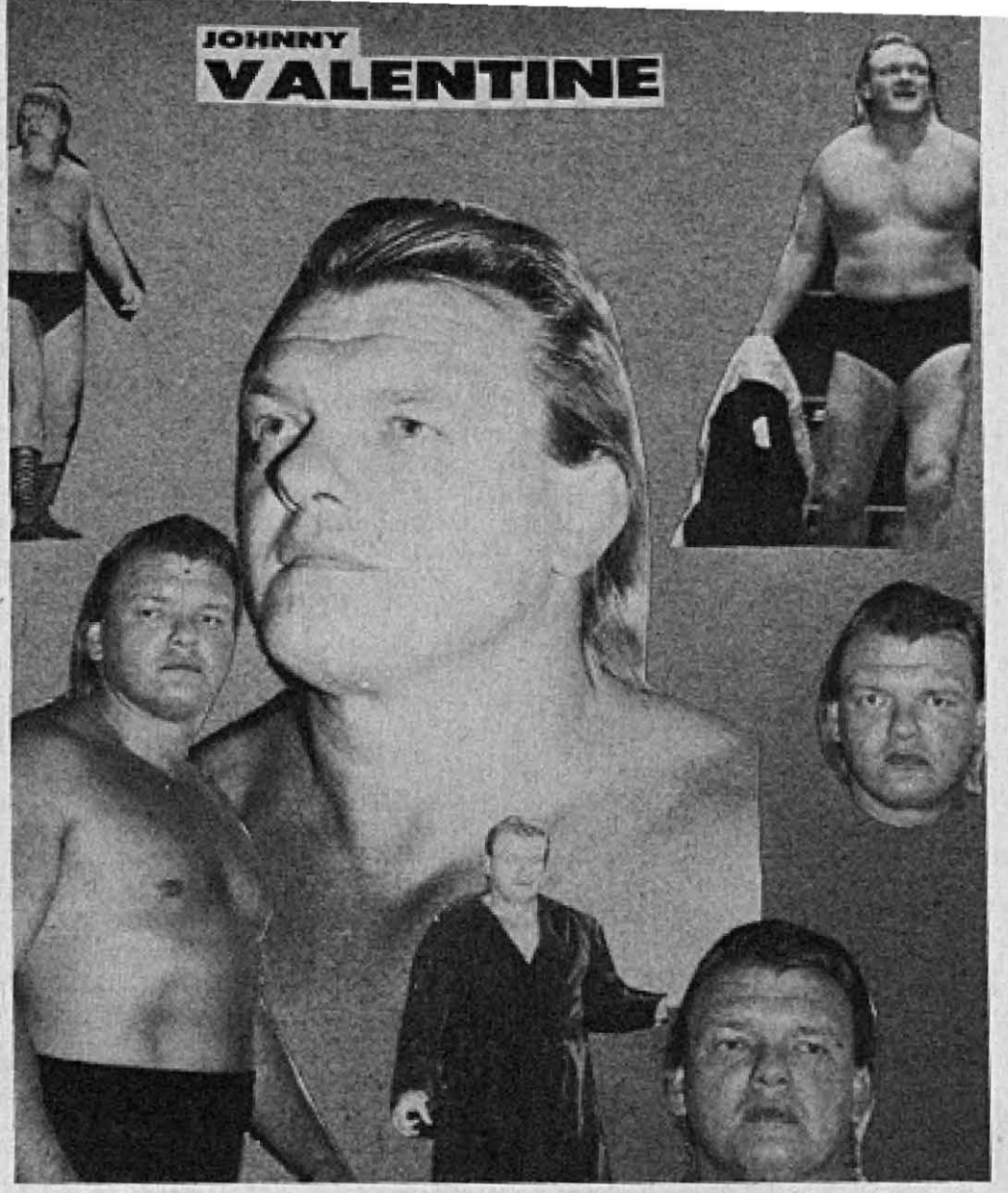


What else can you say — except here are the many moods of Johnny Valentine, perennial world's heavyweight contender.

again.

"Guys like Powers never learn, do they? I am the strongest and most skillful wrestler in the world and he knows there is no way he can beat me," Valentine bellowed on the eve of the long-awaited return.

Powers knew what to expect this time and was ready for anything Valentine might throw at him. As Johnny P. put it, "forewarned is forearmed and you can bet I am."

It was a fantastic performance by both super wrestlers with first Powers and then Valentine thrashing on the brink of victory. However, each rival always managed to break the hold before the referee's fateful count of three.

Every move Powers made was spearheaded by the thought of Valentine's breaking his nose in their first match and he was determined to gain revenge.

Using the ropes for leverage, Valentine prepared to rush Powers with a flying drop kick. Johnny never got airborne. The former uncorked the flying elbow across across Valentine's face. During his years of world-wide campaigning, Valentine had perfected the Flying Elbow smash in setting up opponents for the kill.

Obviously he didn't know Powers was equally skilled with the maneuver.

The blond villain reeled about the ring helplessly and after 14 torrid minutes of action, Powers evened up the ledger with a body pin.

Valentine finally recovered in the dressing and incongruously

WEARS DIADEM AS CHAMP OF MID-ATLANTIC

bemoaned the fact "I was sucker punched." That was a strong statement coming from a man who asked and gave no quarter in the ring.

Johnny still is waiting for that third meeting with Powers and has been complaining to all promoters that the other Johnny is ducking him.

"He knows he was lucky to catch me as he did and that's why Powers won't meet me a third time. I've met and defeated a lot tougher guys than Powers... men like Kiniski, Brazil, Race, The Crusher... you name them, I've beaten them," Valentine contends.

Valentine was the culprit who cost Von Erich his tag title since the N.W.A. ruled a tourney would be held to determine new champions. This time Fritz didn't have a chance to select a fresh partner.

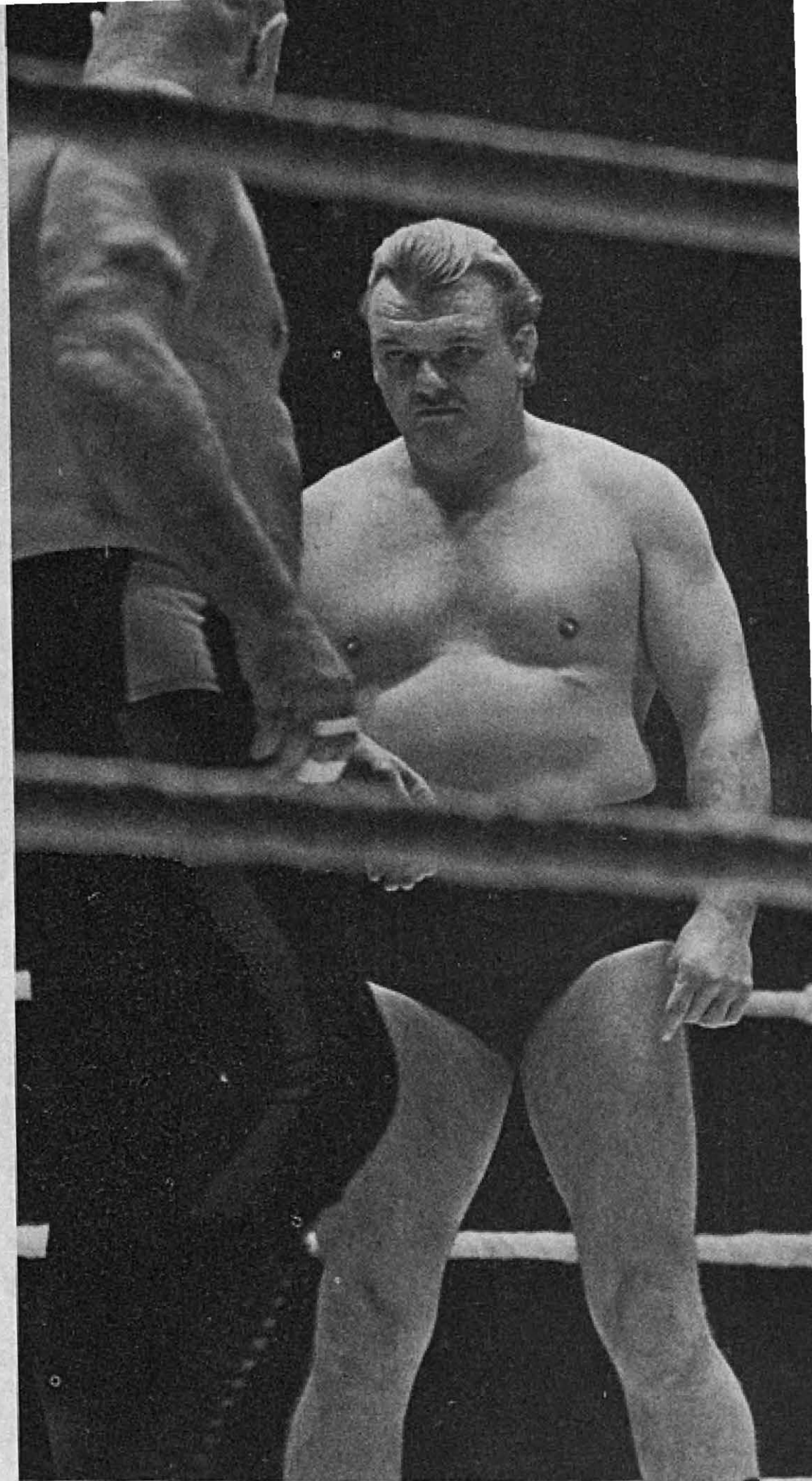
And in the finale it was Wahoo McDaniel and Thunderbold Patterson emerging as the champions.

Valentine finally got a shot at Von Erich for the United States heavyweight championship. Naturally, it was Von Erich seething for revenge but once again the fantastic power and brutality of Johnny prevailed.

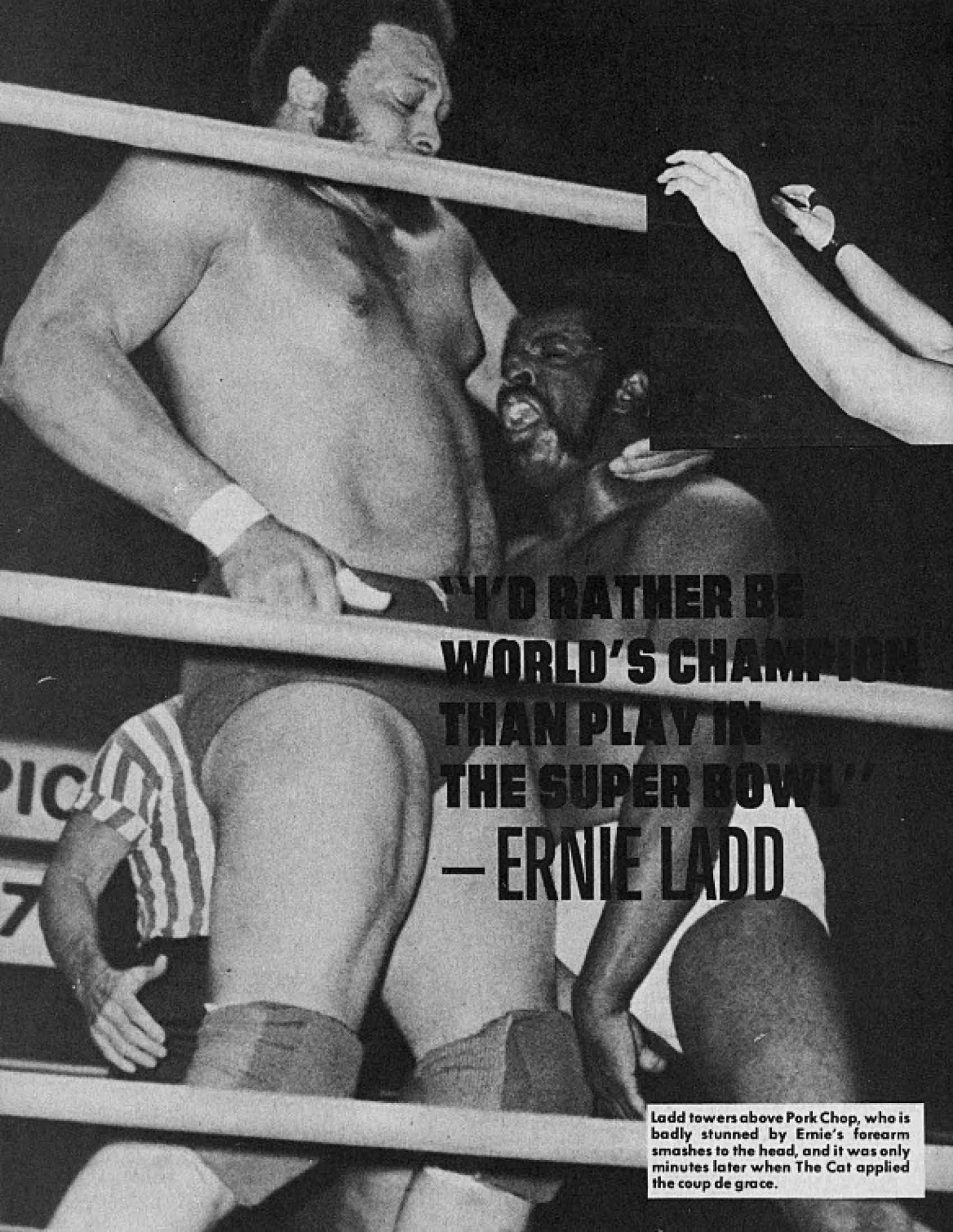
Even old tag partners find no respite when going against Valentine. Johnny defended his belt against Wahoo McDaniel in a wild encounter with both men bleeding from head cuts. Valentine escaped from a near-pin and turned the tables on his one-time buddy.

"I don't care who the guy is in the opposite corner, I'm gonna get him before he gets me," the big fellow opined.

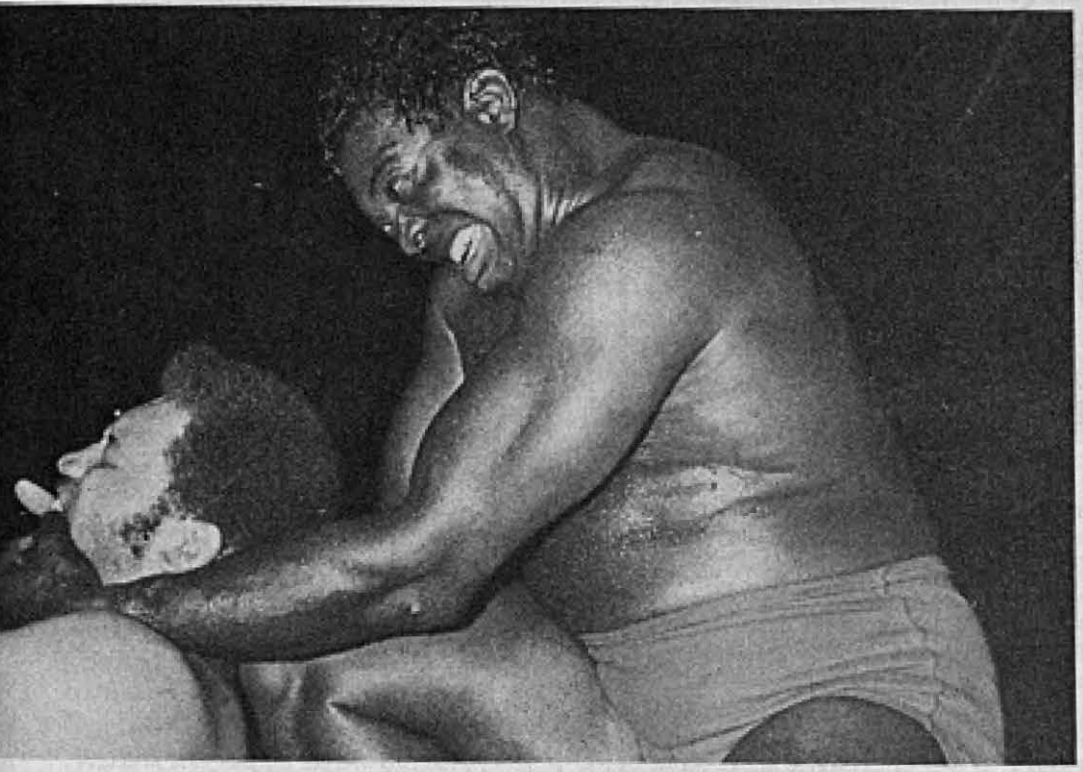
Johnny Valentine usually does.



It is a menacing Valentine who moves in on Hans Schmidt, one of the more colorful German baddies in recent years.



Ladd towers above Pork Chop, who is badly stunned by Ernie's forearm smashes to the head, and it was only minutes later when The Cat applied the coup de grace.



Powerful Bobo Brazil has placed Ladd in a precarious position as he applies his version of the sleeper hold.

GIANT STAR STANDOUT IN NFL IN '60S

Professional and college football players invading wrestling for a second lucrative career is as commonplace as the ring of the bell these days.

However, many of these gridiron goliaths are hesitant about giving up their initial athletic endeavour for full concentration in the art of bone bending.

Ernie Ladd is a conspicuous exception.

If he had his druthers, this powerful 325 pounder would rather win the world's heavyweight championship than play in the Super Bowl.

This is indeed a startling statement when the supreme championship of the National Football League is now considered one of the most cherished awards in all of sport, not to mention the $25,000 each player receives for "going all the way to the summit."

If Ladd uttered such words in front of the Pittsburgh Steelers last January, he would have gotten the horse laugh from here to Bangladesh.

And why not—owner Art Rooney and hundreds of old luminaries waited 42 years for such a magical moment when the Steelers, originally a $2,500 franchise, put down the Minnesota Vikings last winter in New Orleans.

Still, the six-foot, nine-inch Ladd doesn't waver from his conviction.

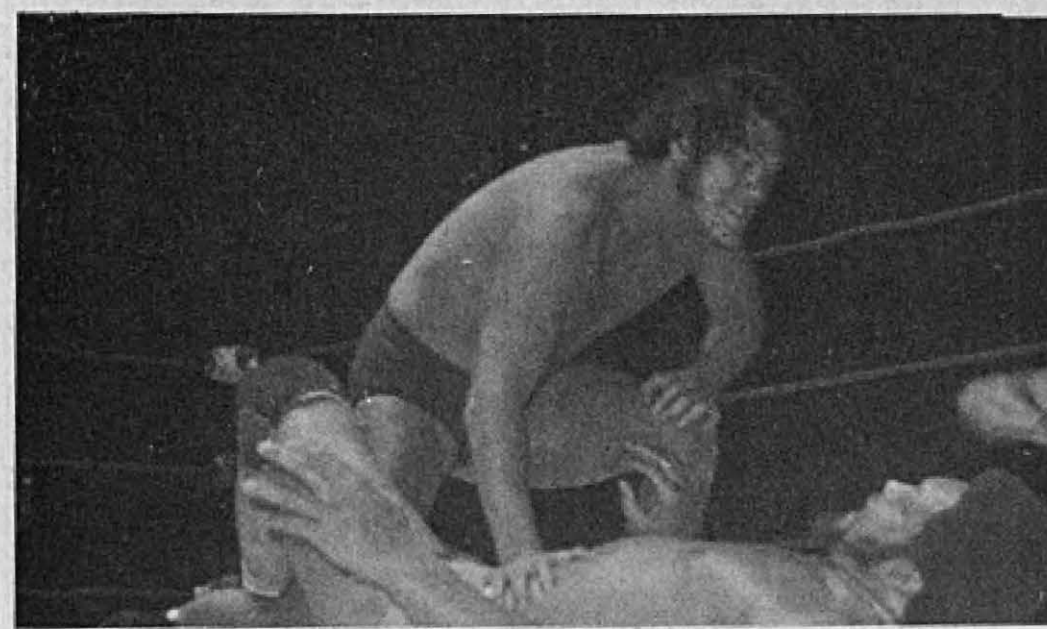
"I'd be a damn liar if I said I would like to have played in the Super Bowl. It is the ultimate all players dream about... you know that old axiom... many are called but few are chosen. Yet I guess that is the way I feel about the world mat championship."

Ernie does present some sound logic in his arguments.

"Look at it this way, an NFL club usually has something like 40-plus men on its roster. A world championship football team gets there by hard work and most important, team work. Naturally, the quarterback is the key but he can't get the job done unless there is an offensive and defensive line doing their job."

Ladd takes a different approach to wrestling.

"In the ring it is just you and the other guy... nobody else to set him up... in other words no blockers and tacklers... you're doing all on your own. A wrestler rises and fall on his own merits. Sometime you do get a win when the referee disqualifies



After one hour of torrid action, neither Ladd nor Inoki could gain a decisive advantage and the match ended in a draw. Bout was for the NWF title.

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your opponents for undue violations but no top wrestler ever depends on that."

Moving from the gridiron to the canvas mat has found Ladd making the transition with comparative ease. Ernie has always been blessed with super strength and once he mastered the intricate holds and counter holds, the big fellow was on his way.

"From the beginning I knew brute strength certainly wouldn't be enough to succeed in pro wrestling. Big, strong guys are a dime a dozen but if you have a complete knowledge of the sport and willing to go all out in dedication and discipline, there is no reason not to succeed. Wrestling certainly isn't for the faint-hearted," Ladd explained.

Faint-hearted... certainly not... not when you are facing a bearded behemoth like Ladd who will tear at your head with the same gusto and viciousness that he employed while pouncing on opposing halfbacks who oft-times were lucky to keep their head much less the football.

Ladd couldn't miss in his quest for national football honors. The big fellow, who is appropriately and sometimes affectionately known as "The Cat", was one of the first of a long line of linemen produced by Eddie Robinson at Grambling College in Lousiana.

Ernie doesn't have many regrets but when you consider he signed with the San Diego Chargers in the old American Football League for a $2,500 bonus in 1961, you couln't blame him for gnashing his teeth over the six-figure pacts many All-Americans are inking today.

Ladd later was traded to the Houston Oilers and Kansas City

This crown atop Ernie Ladd's head isn't for the world's championship but the former professional grid star tells his admirers that is the one he wants before 1975 is over.

Chiefs, who played in the Super Bowl in 1967, and along with another giant, Buck Buchanan, earned All-Pro honors as two of the biggest linemen in the game.

Ernie started thinking about pro wrestling in 1963 and began to take matches in the off season which in the case of a football player is late January through late June.

In addition to the excitement of bruising physical contact and the thrill of personal achievement on his own, Ladd loved to hear the roar of the corwd—something that was more of a constant din when you are down on the football field.

During his early years in pro wrestling Ernie was a hero who teamed with Verne Gagne to capture the A.W.A. Tag-Team title but as he matured Ernie found that too many of the smaller wrestlers took advantage of his good nature and the fact that he often didn't use all of his great strength for fear of inflicting serious injury was helping him beat himself.

"I got smart, and now it is every man for himself, so what if I hear more jeers than cheers, the fans come to see me and pay good money."

Ernie went on to say, "I am a close friend of Muhammad Ali, and when I saw how quickly the public turned against him when he had his trouble, I made up my mind that I didn't care if I was a hero or not, I was going to look out for number one!"

So the good guy became a bad guy, but whether or not you agree on how he wins, you have to admit that he wins. Ladd of course, still today, is one of the biggest men in wrestling and Andre The Giant is about the only one that Ladd has to look up to.

The change-over from good to bad was as we said a gradual thing by Ernie. He puts the blame not only on the way he was duped by opponents but also by the reaction of the fans.

"A lot of wrestling fans are also football fans, and after I left Houston, they used to boo me when I returned as a wrestler. I said to myself, "What a stupid bunch of jerks!" A few years ago just because I played for the Oilers I was their hero and then because I play for the Chiefs I'm a bum. It didn't make sense to me."

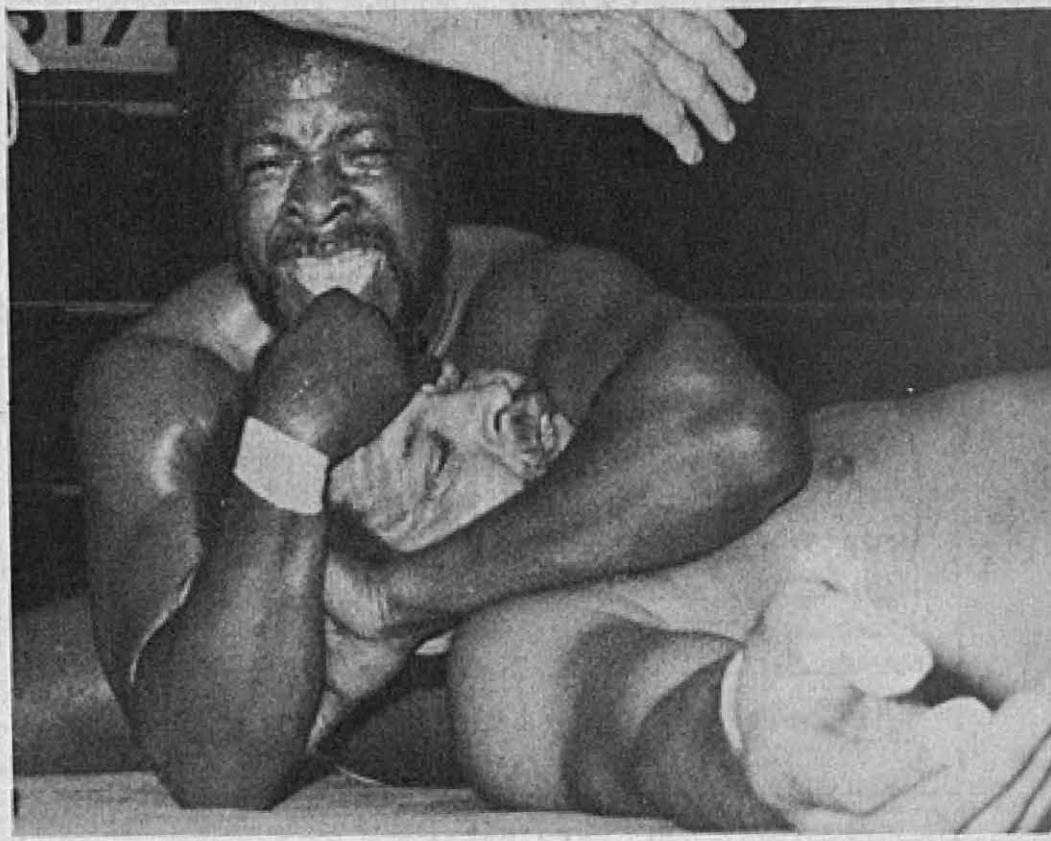
The fickleness of the fans was pointed up even more to Ernie when he quit the Chiefs over a contract dispute. When he wrestled in Kansas City or the other towns around there he was again the target of jeers and abuse. These angered him and he decided if he was going to be booed and jeered for nothing, he might as well earn those jeers. So the next time he wrestled in Kansas City, he turned tiger, he used all of his great strength and every dirty trick he had seen, learned or had done to him either on the mat or on a football field, against his hapless rival.

Well, the crowd really got on him, and the more they screamed the dirtier he got—it was one night to be remembered and from that night on Ernie Ladd was one mean old cat.

One of the high points in Ladd's career came last year in Cleveland when he faced Antonio Inoki for the latter's National Wrestling Federation heavyweight championship.

Before a record crowd, Ladd and the Japanese giant took turns gaining an advantage but when the hour time limit ran out neither

HELD INOKI TO DRAW FOR NWF CROWN



Pork Chop now has Ladd trapped with a head lock and also aids his cause by pulling on Ernie's forehead.

man had scored decisively and the match was declared a draw.

Inoki took his title back to Tokyo and Ladd had the satisfaction of knowing he had taken everything

BIG FELLOW TURNS VILLAIN IF PRESSURED

Ladd doesn't like the necktie he is wearing as Tiger Singh takes full advantage of having Emie caught in the ropes during a rough and tumble bout in Buffalo.

one of the game's super stars could dish out and come away even.

Ernie has displayed his considerable talents on all major circuits—the N.W.A., the A.W.A., W.W.W.F., and of course, N.W.F. where is now rated seventh for the world crown.

Ladd is seething to get another crack at Inoki or either Jack Brisco, Verne Gagne or Bruno Sammartino... it doesn't matter in what order.

Having faced and defeated just about every top notch wrestler in the game, Ernie is confident he can parlay his strength, skill and savvy into the world's heavyweight crown.

"Anybody who thinks he is the world's champion had better reconsider until he faces me in a ring. As the fairy tale goes, all the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't put Humpty Dumpty together again. And when I get finished with them... that's what all those guys will be—Humpty Dumpties."

Anyone who wants to argue the point with Ernie Ladd will have to look him in the eye... and, oh yes, bring a step ladder... ■

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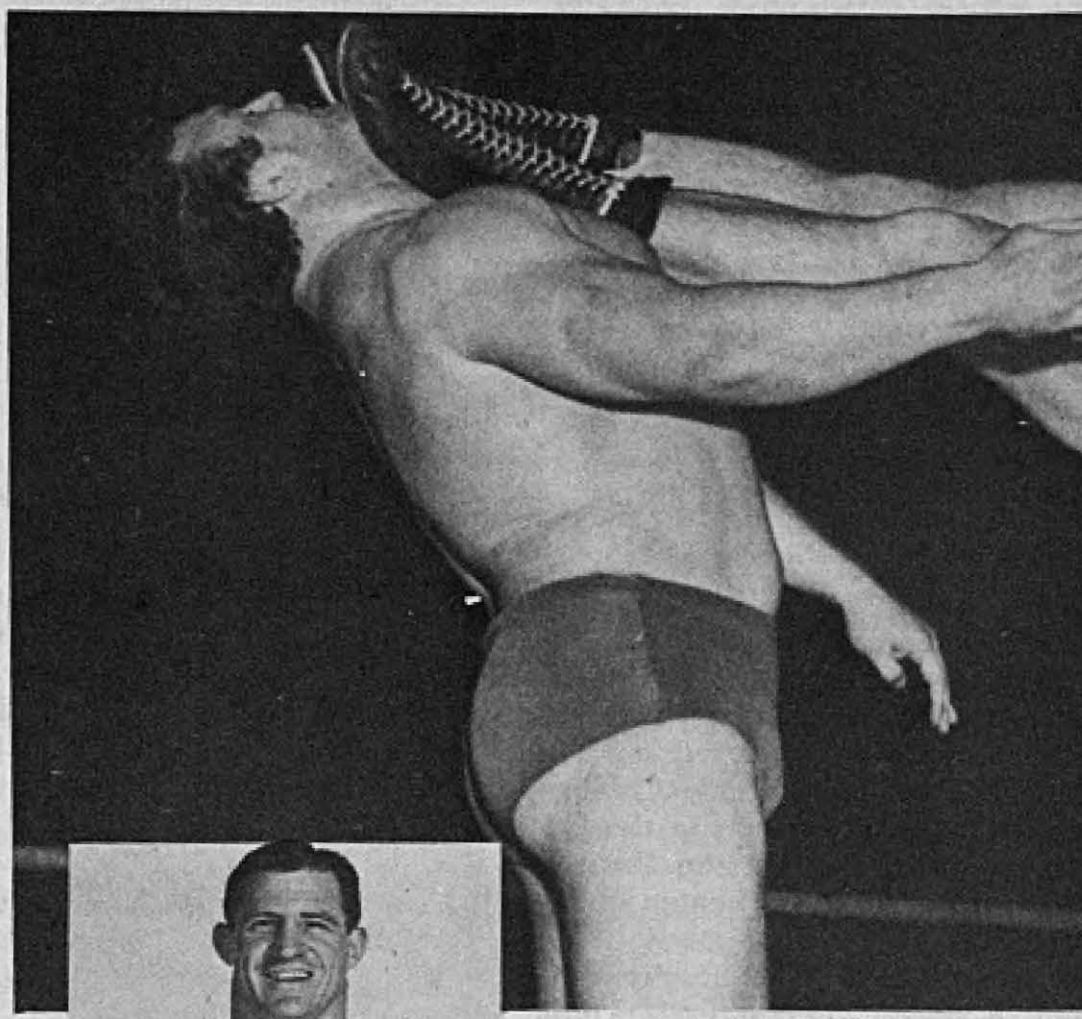

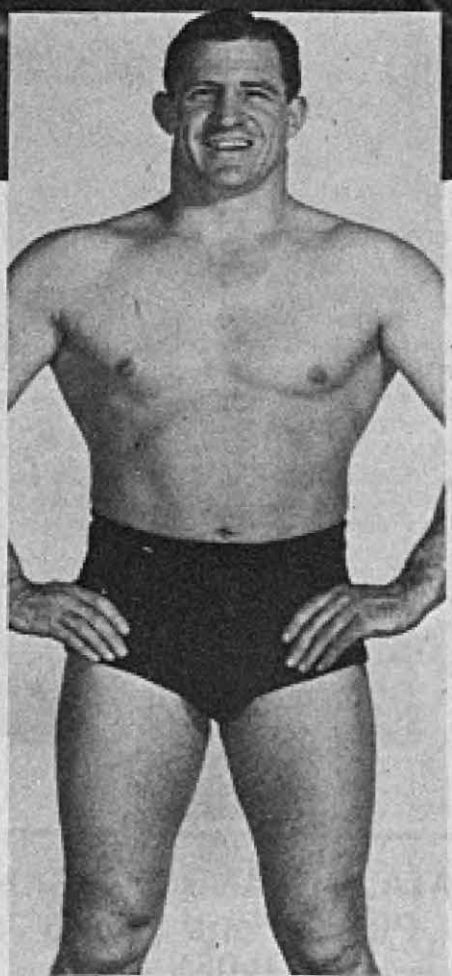

A native of Wellington, Pat O'Connor has always been a stickler for top flight condition and this shot of the 235-pound star is the best evidence we can offer.

By WES JENSEN

Pat O'Connor is on the march again and if he gets another crack at the world's heavyweight title he once held, nobody can cry, "It's the luck of the Irish."

Actually O' Connor was born in Wellington, New Zealand and came to the United States 25 years ago which means every real and pseudo Irishman in the land who follows wrestling is rooting for Pat to regain the throne.

One of the sport's real super veterans, O'Connor believes he can win Jack Brisco's title if given the opportunity and one of his strong supporters is Sam Muchnick, president of the National Wrestling Association and the astute promotional hand in St. Louis for the last 25 years.

"Pat has never looked better and the way he has been rolling up such an

AGELESS PAT O'CONNOR FLYING HIGH AGAIN IN TORRID DRIVE TO OLD CROWN

Pat O'Connor, former world's heavyweight champion, is flying high again just like the night in Chicago when he stunned Hercules Romero with a flying drop kick and went on to an impressive victory.

impressive string of victories there doesn't seem to be any way Brisco can deny him a shot at the title. O'Connor won't be any stranger to Jack since he has served as special referee for a number of Brisco's championship defenses."

O'Connor originally won the title on Jan. 9, 1959 from Dick Hutton in St. Louis after the latter had taken the halo nearly two years earlier from Lou Thesz.

Pat made numerous defenses of the diadem against the best wrestlers in the world until he ran up against Buddy Rogers in Chicago where he was defeated on June 30, 1961.

O'Connor's credentials — always of first class variety — were given further substance recently when the affable gentleman from Kiwe land turned back such formidable opposition as Baron Von Rasckke ans "Moose" Cholak.

"Von Raschke and Cholak are two of the most powerful men in wrestling but O'Connor was very impressive in these solo victories which were real wars from the opening bell. He also teamed with Bobo Brazil to defeat the tough tag combine of Dick Murdock and Big Bill Miller," Muchnick reminded.

Pat, who has to be flirting with the half-century mark on the calendar, has seen enough of Brisco to know all the plus and minus in the makeup of the great 235-pound title holder.

"Brisco is one of the great N.W.A. champions but I believe the heavy travelling schedule he has been keeping will finally take its toll in 1975. Remember he lost two of three matches to Giant Baba in Japan last December and had a rough time beating Dick The Bruiser. I want a shot at him now before anybody else has the chance."

Now in his mid-forties, O'Connor remains at the peak of his powers.

As an amateur, O'Connor won four national heavyweight titles in New Zealand.

Joe Pazandak, Minnesota's contribution among wrestling greats, spotted O'Connor in action during a trip to New Zealand and Australia.

Upon his return he contacted the late Joe Stecher, veteran Minneapolis promoter, extolling the great potential of O'Connor.

Stecher made arrangements for Pat to migrate to the United States in 1950 and he was placed under the wing of Pazandak for a solid training period in the pro sport.

O'Connor started an intense campaign to gain recognition by engaging in one-night standscross-country.

However, O'Connor kept winning and the grind began to reap dividends. By November, 1952, the rugged young man was rated number six in the world and he deadlocked with Verne Gagne for the top spot in a popularity

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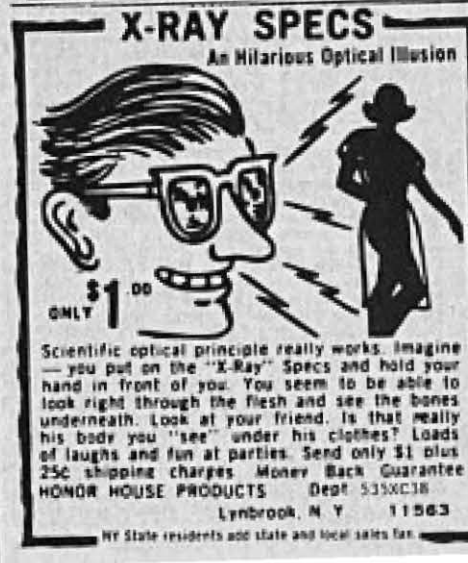
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poll. He also teamed with Winnipeg grappler Roy McClarty.

Perhaps their biggest achievement was forging two draws with then world's tag team champions, Reggie "The Crusher" Lisowski and Art Neilson.

Pat returned to North America for the New Year and on Jan. 10, 1957 in Toronto, he teamed with Whipper Billy Watson for a tag match against Buddy Rogers and Gene Kiniski.

It was a bruising encounter with O'Connor and Watson getting the decision when their rivals were disqualified.

Returning to singles action, Pat chalked up an impressive string of victories over such men as Fritz Von Erich, Ike Eakins and the Mighty Ursus.

The New Zealand product's name was now synonymous with victory. On Feb. 1, 1958, O'Connor paired with former N.W.A. world's champion Bobby Managoff to win by disqualification over then world's champions, Reggie and Stan Lisowski.

In individual combat, Pat took the measure of Mad Dog Vachon, Joe Killer Christie, and Luis Martinez among others.

O'Connor finally got the opportunity he had been working 10 years to achieve — a world's championship match with Hutton in Kiel.

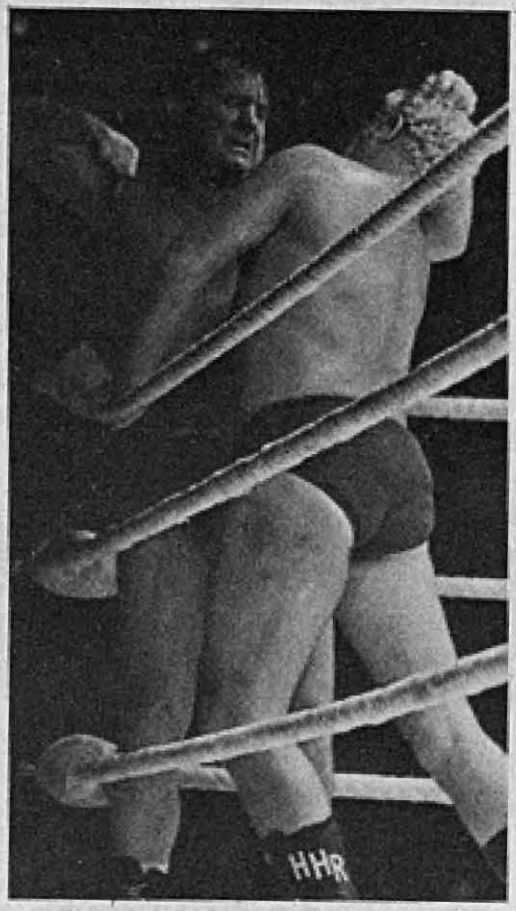
That O'Connor went on to win the title was considered an upset by some unknowing mat gentry but Pat proved his right to the throne by defeating Hutton decisively four times during the year.

Reigning as a powerful champion, Pat's partial list of victims reads like a wrestling's Who's Who during '59.

The Irishman's string included Mitsu Arakawa, Dangerous Danny McShain, Hans Schmidt, Wild Bill Longson (a former champion); Sonny Myers; Haystacks Calhoun, Kinji Shibuya, The Zebra Kid, Rip Hawk, Cowboy Bob Ellis, Nick Kozak, Luther Lindsey and Angelo Poffo. Pat derailed such titans as Louis Tillet, Karl Von Hess, Sweet Daddy Siki, Abe Jacobs, Dory Funk, Sr. and Haru Sasaki.

Connor went to the well one time too often on the night of June 30, 1961 in Comiskey Park. The opponent, the highly-regarded Buddy "Nature Boy" Rogers. An all-time wrestling attendance record of 38,622 turned out with a paid gate of $141,345.

Pat was sluggish at the outset and Rogers took the opening fall after 8:30 with a knee lift and body press. The Irish champion came back to even the match in six minutes with a reverse rolling cradle.



O'Connor has met all the greats and near-greats in the business and he is seen here in all his fury as he prepares to stun Harley Race with a right hand to the face.

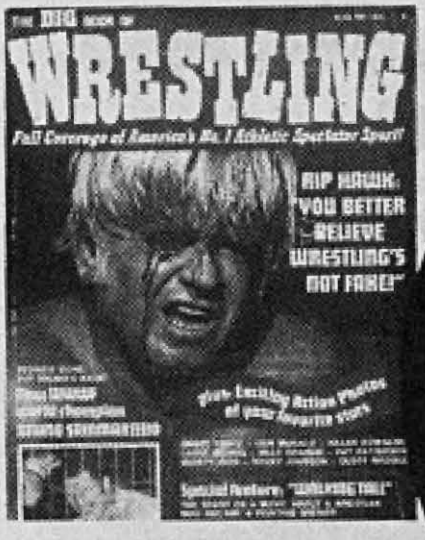
In a wild and frenzied windup, O'Connor missed a drop kick and became entangled in the ropes. He also injured his groin and was easy prey for Rogers to score the decisive pin and take home the title.

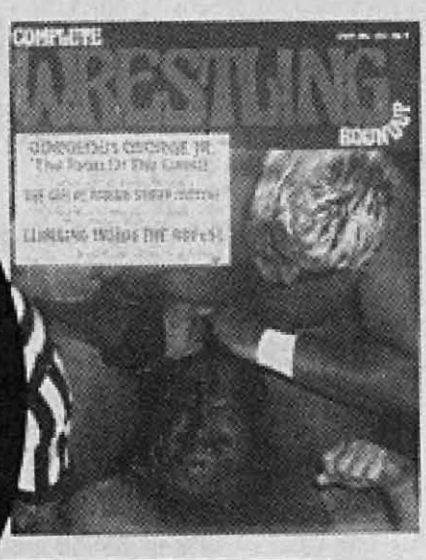
Rogers finally agreed to give Pat a rematch two months later — Sept. 1, 1961 — and this time there were 28,000 patrons at the Comiskey ball yard.

The return went the three fall limit but Rogers prevailed in the clincher.

Taking a defeat at the hands of the Wellington Walloper are such stars as The Stomper, Dr. Bill Miller, Fritz Von Erich, Lorenzo Parente, Moose Cholak, Waldo Von Erich, Dick The Bruiser, Stan Kowalski, Baron Von Raschke, Danny Miller, Pat Patterson, Ivan Koloff, Luke Graham and Dick Murdoch.

In recent years O'Connor has been campaigning with great success on the Missouri-Kansas-Nebraska-Iowa circuit but he still finds time for junkets to New York and California.





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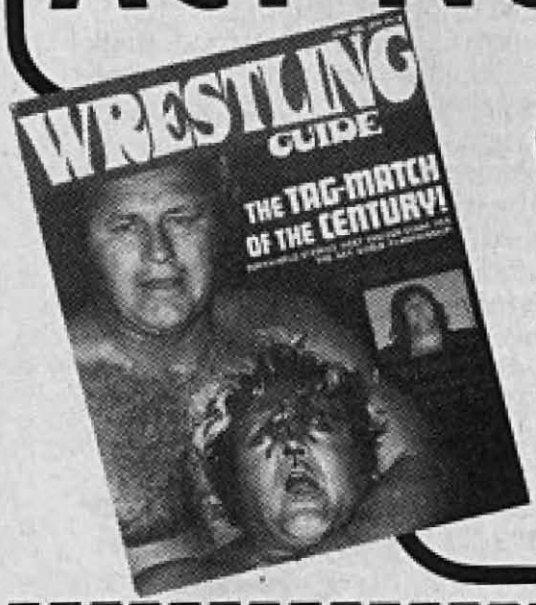

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